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 Geneva G 2.50
 Hanoi H 2.50
 Harare H 2.50
 Hong Kong H 2.50
 Istanbul I 2.50
 Jakarta J 2.50
 London L 2.50
 Lyons L 2.50
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 Mexico M 2.50
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 Ottawa O 2.50
 Paris P 2.50
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What's gone wrong with the sport of kings?

Racing uncertainties

G2 with European weather

What makes the mega-rich so charitable?

Dishing out the dosh

Society

The hottest issue on the planet

G2 pages 10/11

Minister 'given wrong advice' □ Gulf war syndrome study announced

Veterans force retreat

David Fairhall and Rebecca Smithers

THE Government yesterday buckled under six years of pressure from veterans' organisations when it announced a major investigation into Gulf war syndrome, the condition it had previously refused to acknowledge.

One of the two studies announced will examine how veterans' fertility has been affected and whether their children show an abnormal incidence of birth defects.

The other study will try to determine whether veterans now suffer more illness and try to identify possible causes. Veterans typically complain of chronic fatigue, memory loss, muscle pains and depression.

The 21.3 million programme, over three years, will involve 12,000 soldiers — 6,000 of them will be veterans of the 1990/91 conflict and the rest will be a comparative group who did not go to the Gulf.

Opposition MPs said the Government's about-turn on the issue was humiliating.

Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, couched the Commons announcement with renewed apologies for misleading Parliament over the use of dangerous organo-phosphate pesticides during the conflict.

Emphasising the Government's desire to be "entirely open" about the matter, Mr Soames admitted that Ministry of Defence civil servants and military officials provided ministers with inaccurate information over a period of more than two years. An investigation was being carried out and those responsible would be disciplined if necessary.

About 51,000 service men and women served in the Gulf. Mr Soames said 921 veterans had been examined. The Government was keeping an "open mind" on whether there is generally more illness among our veterans than should be expected and whether there are Gulf-service related factors at work which, as yet, remain to be discovered.

The defence ministry is funding the three-year statistical studies recommended by the Medical Research Council. The studies include a general analysis of 3,000 Gulf veterans' medical history compared with 3,000 other soldiers who served in places such as Bosnia; and a specific investigation, on a similar scale, of

Gulf veterans' reproductive health.

The studies will be coordinated with a third epidemiological study among Britons who served in the Gulf — more than 1,000 of whom have complained of subsequent illness. The work, funded by the United States, is being carried out at King's College, London.

The announcement was immediately condemned as "too little, too late" by veterans' representatives. Tony Flint, of the National Gulf Veterans and Families Association, said: "By the time this research is complete at least another 100 veterans will be dead." But his members would willingly co-operate with the studies.

The birth defects study will go beyond research carried out in the US, where this aspect had received little attention, he said. According to the association, 14 cases of a rare heart condition had been reported among veterans' children, far more than the normal incidence.

Mr Soames admitted that service personnel were vaccinated against anthrax and plague to counter a feared Iraqi biological missile attack — until yesterday this was an official military secret. Whooping cough vaccine was also used to boost the anthrax protection.

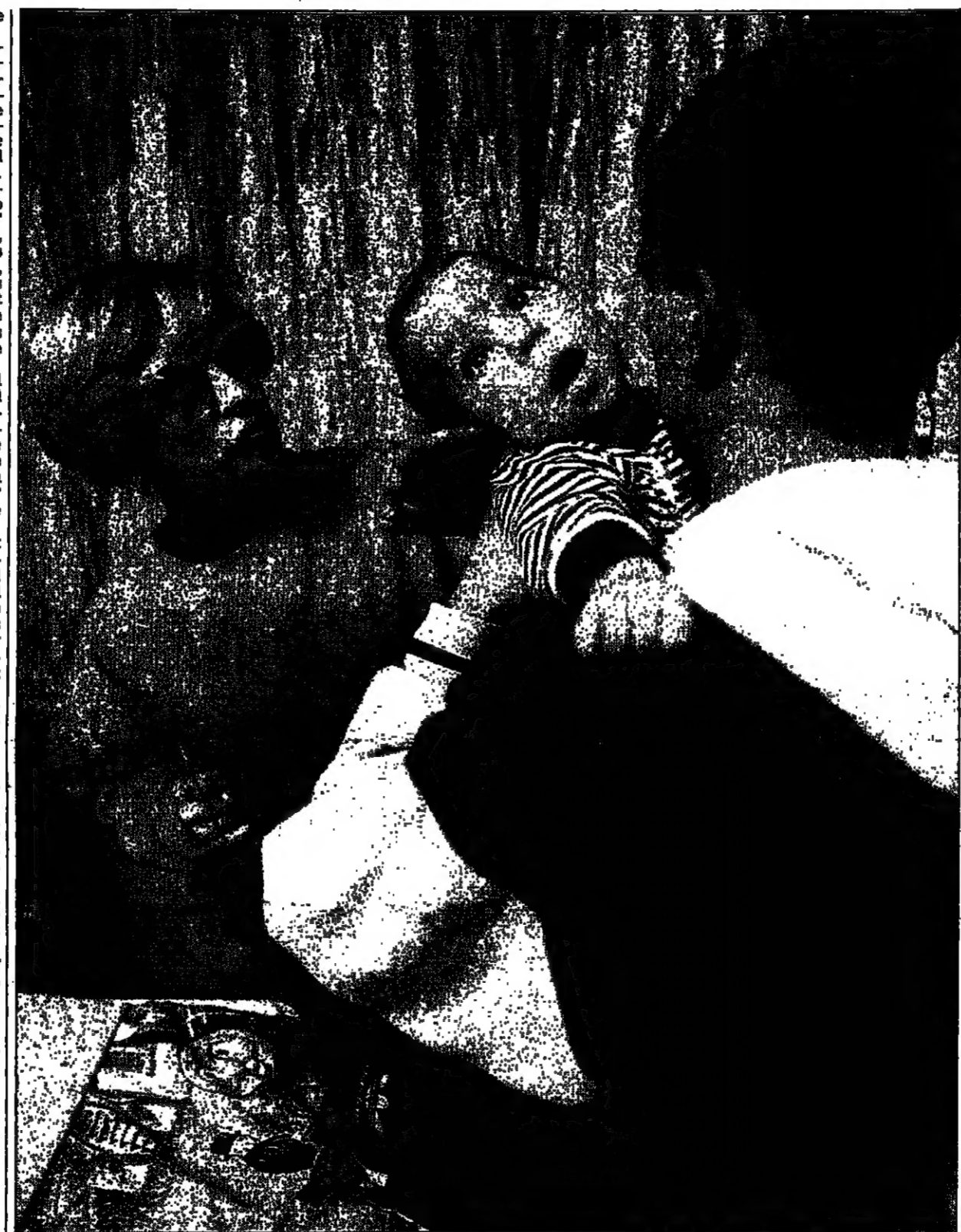
The minister also confirmed that organo-phosphate pesticides, similar to sheep dips, which have caused health problems among farmers and are chemically related to nerve gas, were bought from local Saudi Arabians and extensively used — something not disclosed earlier in repeated Parliamentary answers.

David Clark, the shadow defence secretary, called Mr Soames's statement "a humiliating climbdown". He added: "Since allegations of Gulf war syndrome came to the fore, we have called on the Government to honour its commitment to veterans. The Government's failure to act earlier has led to three years of uncertainty and suffering for our troops."

Liberal Democrat defence spokesman Menzies Campbell described the announcement as "a very substantial humiliation".

Mr Soames also faced criticism from Tory backbenchers, such as Edwina Currie, who were concerned about the further uncertainty for their afflicted constituents and about the question of no-fault compensation. Mr Soames said he accepted "the frustration and personal anguish" of the victims.

Leader comment, page 8



Damon and Michelle Seager with their son Grant. 'They have said it is just one of those things' PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD OLIVER

'I do wish sometimes these people could come and look at our little boy and see the sort of things we have to do to enable him just to be here'

GRANT is 15 months now. You would not know it. The cherished first child of Damon and Michelle Seager, born in peaceful times after his father's return from the Gulf war, is a long way from walking, writes Sarah Bossley.

He cannot crawl. He cannot even sit up. He is fed through a tube in his stomach and several times an hour, day and night, his mother or a nurse must suction the saliva out of his throat to stop him choking.

Grant cannot swallow. "They do tell us that not swallowing is a very rare condition," said Michelle. "They have said it is just

one of those things. I can't believe that the baby of two reasonably healthy people can have such problems."

She is 31 and Damon is 28 — not old parents, who have a statistically increased chance of babies with birth defects. Michelle thinks Grant's misfortunes stem from his father's service as an army driver in the Gulf. "I think whatever they were subjected to in the Gulf has damaged them in some way and they are producing bad sperm."

She added: "I just think somebody somewhere is responsible for this and I do wish sometimes they could come — these government people — and look at our lit-

tle boy and see the sort of things we have to do to enable him just to be here."

When he was born, in September last year, mother and baby both nearly died. After a pregnancy full of pain, knowing, she says, that something was wrong, Michelle haemorrhaged six weeks before the baby was due.

The boy is back in hospital now. He has continual chest infections and chronic lung disease.

While other children are leaping the usual developmental hurdles, Grant's parents are left on the starting grid, wondering whether he will survive. "It looks very bleak," said Michelle.

Millennium star project faces axe in political row

Millennium star project faces axe in political row

Ewen MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

THE centrepiece of the millennium celebrations, a spectacular exhibition dome in London's Greenwich, is at serious risk of being scrapped to decide whether the costings are realistic, especially if Labour is not supportive.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, had adopted it as his pet project and pushed ahead in spite of protests that national lottery money should be spent on smaller projects throughout the country rather than the dome.

The fate of the Millennium Dome, which was to have held 12 pavilions, looks to have been decided yesterday at a series of private meetings held at Westminster between politicians and those directly involved in the project.

Both Mr Heseltine and the National Heritage Secretary, Virginia Bottomley, will seek to blame Labour, who in turn will point the finger at Mr Heseltine for mishandling it, not least by leaving it so late.

Mrs Bottomley was said last night to be looking for a Commons slot to make a statement.

Labour senses a disaster in the making and has cooled towards the project after looking at the costings.

The Millennium Commission, which administers lottery funds, will meet today to consider the business plan for the Greenwich project drawn up by Millennium Central, the group overseeing it. A decision on whether to go ahead has to be made before Christmas.

The crux of the problem is that Millennium Central, which has costed the project at £700 million, needs a promise to underwrite the funds from both the Conservatives and Labour, the latter because the private sector

recognises that it might form the next government.

That guarantee is not likely to be forthcoming from Labour, which does not want to face in Government a project whose costs keep spiralling and to which an open-ended cheque has been given.

It is up to the commission to decide whether the costings are realistic, especially if Labour is not supportive.

Work on the dome, the size of two Wembley stadiums, is scheduled to begin in the middle of next year and be completed in autumn 1998. The opening was planned for December 31, 1999.

Estimates of the cost have ranged from £250 million to £1 billion but Millennium Central has put the figure at £700 million in its draft budget for its presentation to the Millennium Commission today, with £430 million spent on infrastructure and the exhibitions and the remainder on running costs.

Millennium Central estimates it can balance the books by getting £200 million from lottery money, a further £150 million from the private sector and the rest raised from gate receipts, sponsorship and other forms of income.

A spokesman for Millennium Central said last night: "We are looking for party consensus round the project. Without that, the project will not happen."

Lottery funds allocated to the commission are due to end after 2000.

Labour's shadow heritage secretary, Jack Cunningham, indicated last week that he had other plans for the lottery money after that date. The shadow education spokesman, David Blunkett, has been looking at diverting the money into schools and other projects.

Work has already begun on clearing the Greenwich site for the dome.

MPs to censure Willetts for role in cash-for-questions affair

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

MPs agreed last night on a report criticising the role of David Willetts, the Paymaster General, over the cash for questions affair.

After 25 hours of deliberation Tony Newton, the Leader

of the House, finally got Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs on the Commons standards and privileges committee to agree to put forward a report to the Speaker today.

Their findings will be published this afternoon. It is understood that the report will be unanimous.

The most likely outcome is

expected to conclude that Mr Willetts, then a junior whip, behaved badly in trying to influence the Commons members interests committee over the cash for questions affair two years ago. But it was not clear whether the censure will be strong enough to provoke his resignation.

The present inquiry was started two months ago after

a complaint was laid against Mr Willetts by Andrew Miller, Labour MP for Ellesmere Port, after a memorandum written by Mr Willetts became public. In the memo, written on the day the Guardian exposed ministers Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith for receiving cash from Harrods owner Mohamed al Fayed for asking Parliamentary Questions,

Mr Willetts suggests the committee uses its "good Tory majority" to rush through proceedings, or treat the matter as sub judice.

MPs questioned both Mr Willetts and Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, then chairman of the members interests committee, about its contents. Mr Willetts denied he was trying to advise the committee

what to do. But he came under tough questioning from Quentin Davies, Tory MP for Stamford, who said he must either be lying to the committee or have been lying when he wrote the memo.

Since then Mr Newton has had to balance the views of Mr Davies with other more loyalist Tories in trying to reach an unanimity.

Inside

Britain
 British...
 5

World News
 ...
 6

Finance
 ...
 11

Sport
 ...
 16

Comment and Letters 8
 Obituaries 10
 G2
 Crossword 15; Weather 16;
 Radio and TV 16

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The Guardian

To our readers,

Over recent weeks, we have been experiencing production problems which have seriously affected our distribution in some countries.

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Sketch

Kunzle cakes and fruitcakes



Simon Hoggart

IT WAS a weird Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday, even weirder than usual. The weirdest moment came when Mr Major announced that he had no intention of resigning before the next election — a remark greeted with total silence from the Conservative benches.

But the rest of the session was pretty weird too. For one thing, Mr Major seemed to imagine that he was still at home in Huntingdon and was welcoming Mr Blair to tea in his conservatory.

Mr Blair was very polite, to begin with. Did the Prime Minister agree with Sir Leon Brittan that Conservative divisions in Europe were weakening Britain's position within the EU? he inquired, in the same way as he might have remarked on the vicarage roses.

Mr Major didn't agree, but then he didn't actually disagree. He offered Mr Blair a metaphorical cup of tea. And a Kunzle Cake. (Do you remember Kunzle Cakes? They were sort of chocolate and spongy and filled with sweet, slimy gunk. I feel sure they are still on sale at the Huntingdon 8 Till Late Mini-Mart.)

He mused that two things were damaging the British position. One was that the House of Commons was divided. The other was that the rest of the EU was expecting "a very easy ride were there to be a Labour government".

The implication — that the crisis in the Conservative Party can be blamed on 17 years of Labour misrule (the 17 years we are expecting to start next year) — was clearly even by Mr Major's high standards. Something I've noticed is that he always has to have someone else to blame for everything that goes wrong, and it's usually the Opposition.

However, he continued to

Review

From steely snap to tender trap

John Fordham

Cassandra Wilson
Shepherd's Bush Empire

ON THE TURN of the decade, they used to promote her as "the jazz diva for the nineties". She possessed several virtues that endorsed the contention. Her voice mostly occupied a majestic mid-register with a steely snap like Nina Simone's. Her shows were not set pieces but seemed to bend with the feet. But her music also seemed in tension between the percussive restlessness of New York street-corner funk, and an older jazz of standard ballads and feline melodic ingenuity. It was a tension that made Wilson seem compellingly like a young woman forging a new way of singing out of the materials around her.

Last night, the jury was out: Wilson abandoned her investigations of cutting-edge nouveau funk around 1993 and opted for a popular roots music that set contemporary material and classic Robert Johnson blues in a guitar-led acoustic band instead of a funk or jazz group, and this set-up she maintained. But unlike earlier London performances with a similar repertoire, Wilson seemed restless and elusive, as if she had sent a reluctant doppelgänger to perform in her place. The mix of resonant detail and irresistible momentum that had marked out her most imposing performances were obscured by a sound mix that buried her subtleties and the ensemble's difficulties in finding a groove it could share.

Catholic schools face influx

David Ward

PRINCIPALS of leading Roman Catholic sixth form colleges are calling on education ministers to help cope with a boom in demand for places from students of all faiths — and none.

Colleges with good exam results and a clear moral ethos are snowed under with applications. "We operate an open admissions policy here,"

speak in the same courteous, slightly mannered fashion. The two men were beginning to resemble Hinge and Bracket, a pair of drag queens abusing each other, but within the strict rules of social nicety.

Mr Blair sucked the butter thoughtfully out of a toasted crumpet. "After his Sunday interview, much of which I would agree with, there is less clear water between him, his deputy, one half of the Cabinet and this side of the House, than there is between him and his backbenchers."

We held our breath. Was Mr Major going to defect? It would solve an awful lot of his problems. The main difficulty would be finding him a safe Labour seat in time for the next election. Huntingdon might do.

He mused aloud that a Labour government would abandon many of the positions which the Conservatives had taken up in Europe. "A little more Earl Grey, Mr Blair? I think there's still a drop in the pot..." (I made the last bit up.)

At this point the elaborate etiquette became something of a strain and they started chucking metaphorical slices of Battenberg cake at each other. Mr Blair pointed out that Jerry Hayes (C, Harlow) had described Teresa Gorman (C, Billericay) as "part of the politically insane — and some may say he is a very good judge of these matters".

Soon afterwards the conservatory was invaded by hoodlums and riff-raff, and the general mood was destroyed. Ms Lynne Jones (Lab, Selly Oak) asked whether he would take seriously any other European government which was in as much of a shambles as this one. Last time it had happened, he had resigned as party leader. Should he now resign as prime minister?

Mr Major said, to the weird silence from behind him, that the simple answer was no.

"The splits on that side of the House are seismic!" he added. He was getting over-excited. People who live in glass sitting rooms shouldn't throw teapots.

At that point, Mrs Gorman — the politically insane one — stood up, to the cheers of the whole Labour party. "Ee, seismic!" said someone with a happy, northern accent.

New stability force in Bosnia will help smoke out elusive suspects indicted by tribunal in The Hague

Nato to pursue war wanted

John Palmer in Brussels

NATO forces in Bosnia are to adopt a tough "suffocation" strategy in the new year in a concerted effort to seek out and help arrest more than 60 indicted war criminals.

Nato foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels yesterday, were told that without more robust action to bring alleged war criminals to trial in The Hague, the alliance might unwittingly lay the seeds of another war in Bosnia.

The existing 60,000-strong Nato peace force, IFOR, has resisted active involvement in the detention of suspected war criminals, arguing that its main task was to separate the warring parties.

But while Nato was reluctant last night to spell out precisely what new instructions troops will be given when a new stability force of 25,000 to 30,000 — S-For — takes over on December 20, it was clear that a much higher priority would be given to the drive to capture suspects wanted by the international war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands.

"The curtain of steel which has protected some of the most notorious war criminals and prevented them being seized and put on trial is beginning to weaken," one Nato diplomat said.

"We will want to harass them and to suffocate them by gradually hemming them into places where they can be more readily apprehended. I would expect S-For to begin to act sooner rather than later on the issue of war criminals if only because there will be a gradual rundown in the number of troops in Bosnia over the next 18 months."

The new strategy was described as moving beyond the present low-key role on the war crimes issue, though stopping short of "turning S-For into a police force".

It will include the provision of increased intelligence on the movements of suspected war criminals, and new authority for the international peace force to follow up cases on non-compliance with the tribunal by local police.

But at the heart of the new strategy is a greater willingness to have S-For involved in the arrest and transfer to The Hague of indicted war criminals. No final decisions will be taken on the troops' exact role until a detailed military study of all the issues involved has been completed.

"We are all concerned about the situation of the war criminals and we are very concerned to ensure that the authority of the international war crimes tribunal is upheld," the United States secretary of state, Warren Christopher, said last night. "We will be seeing how new and more effective methods of help can be used to help the war crimes tribunal carry out its responsibilities."

The Canadian foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, said: "The continued freedom of indicted war criminals is one of the greatest threats to a durable peace, and if S-For departs without having contributed to the apprehension of these people, I believe we will have left the seeds of future conflict in Bosnia to germinate."

The meeting also condemned the Serbian government's refusal to recognise opposition wins in local elections last month. It called

on President Slobodan Milosevic to reverse the decision.

"We are dismayed that the Serbian authorities have ignored the calls of the international community to respect internationally recognised democratic principles," a statement issued by the foreign ministers said.

Mr Christopher explicitly warned President Milosevic that he faced deepening international isolation.

"The people of Serbia deserve what their neighbours in central Europe have: clean elections, a free press, a normal market economy," he told the meeting. "If President Milosevic respects their will, Serbia can enjoy the legitimacy and assistance it needs. If he seeks to rule Serbia as an unreformed dictatorship, it will only increase his isolation and the suffering of his people."

The US and other Nato governments also distanced themselves from the Croatian president, Franjo Tudjman, who is under increasing political siege from the democratic opposition in his country.

"It was most inappropriate for President Tudjman to recently award a medal to the Croatian General [Thomas] Blaskic, who is in detention and awaiting trial in The Hague for war crimes," a US state department spokesman said.

Meanwhile, the alliance yesterday said it would begin admitting new members from central Europe next year, regardless of whether Russia agrees to form a partnership with Nato. Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia have been widely tipped as the first new entrants.

ers from loyalist demonstrators in Ballymena, County Antrim have risen to an estimated 250,000. The cost of the 15-week security operation was confirmed yesterday as detectives questioned two men about an arson attack at the Church of Our Lady in the town's Harryville area.

Another demonstration is expected on Saturday.

On Monday, flammable liquid was poured through a smashed window of the church and set alight. The flames were quickly put out by a passing RUC patrol.

Last Saturday evening about 100 Protestants turned out to support their Catholic neighbours after riotous mobs of police kept the demonstrators back. The loyalists are protesting at nationalist objections to an Orange Order parade through the nearby village of Dunloy.

Responding to the publication of the spending plans, the shadow Northern Ireland secretary, Marjorie Mowlem, said: "This is a budget for the short term. Spending has increased on programmes to deal with policy failures like the cost of unemployment and BSE. But in the long term, everyone will suffer from cuts in housing, education, training, agriculture and research.

"IRA violence and, on top of that, the disturbances this summer and after Drumcree are major factors increasing costs. But that is only part of the story.

"The Government is making year-on-year cuts in the overall budget as well, which makes the job of building a stable economic base to underpin the peace process harder."

With law and order topping the Government's spending priority, the RUC will receive an additional £77 million over the next three years to deal with security. A further £42 million has been provided to meet the predicted cost of claims resulting from terrorist attacks and civil unrest.

Training and employment are the main areas to suffer, with a £29 million cut in spending on community jobs programmes, a reduction of 2,000 places on the Jobskills adult training scheme and the closure of a training centre at Dundonald, east Belfast.

Spending in Northern Ireland remains 30 per cent higher per head than in the rest of the UK. But cuts have been implemented across the board, hitting education, health and roads.

Meanwhile, policing costs to protect Catholic churchgo-

ers from loyalist demonstrators in Ballymena, County Antrim have risen to an estimated 250,000. The cost of the 15-week security operation was confirmed yesterday as detectives questioned two men about an arson attack at the Church of Our Lady in the town's Harryville area.

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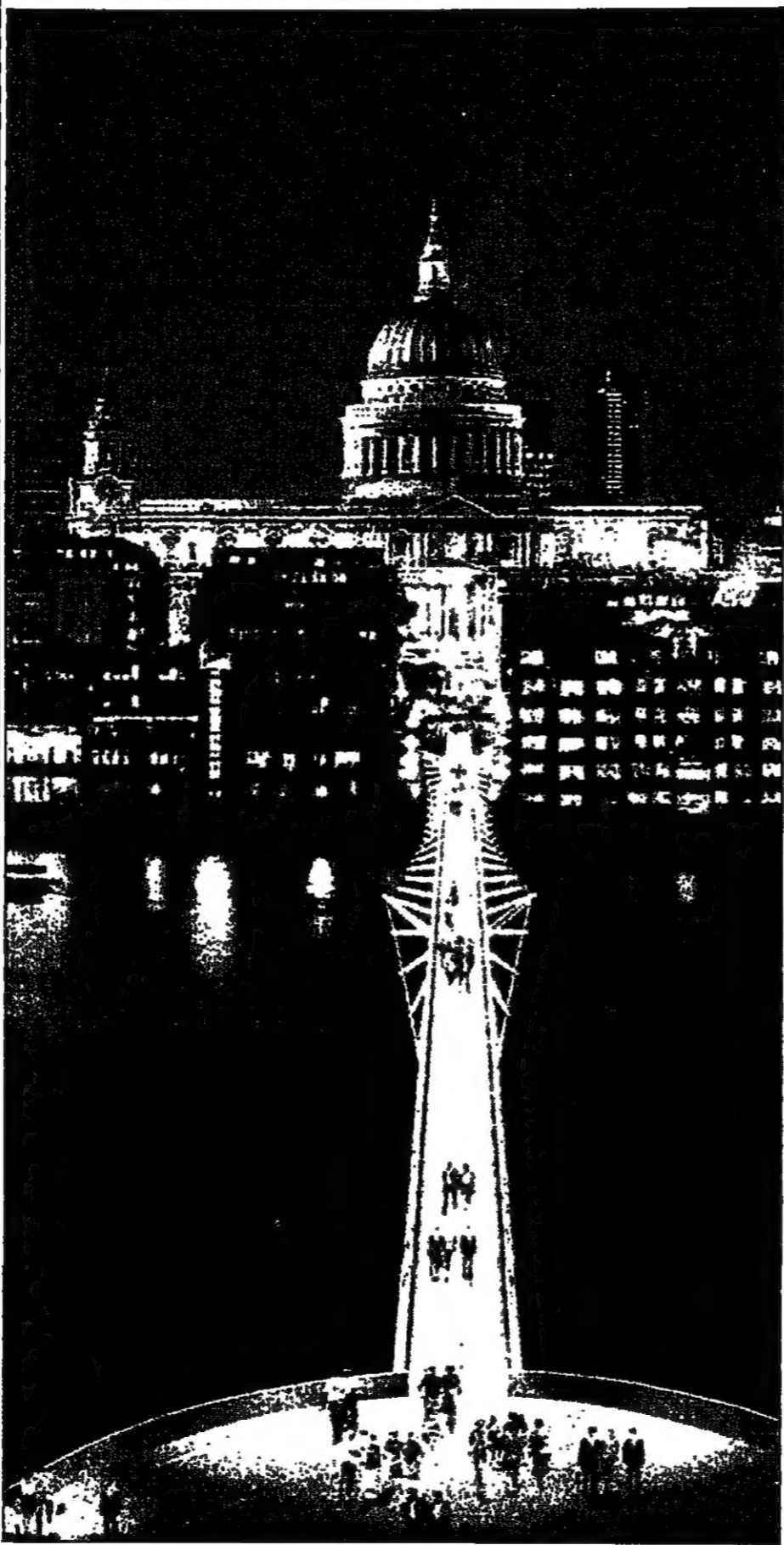
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An artist's impression of the view towards St Paul's over the Millennium bridge, which will be London's first new crossing for more than a century

Britons' metal arc design chosen to bridge Thames

Dan Glaister
Arts Correspondent

THE competition to design London's first pedestrian bridge was won by the British team of architect Sir Norman Foster and sculptor Sir Anthony Caro, it was announced yesterday.

The bridge, an arc of stainless steel and cable, will run from below St Paul's Cathedral on the north bank to the Bankside power station, the site of the new Tate Gallery of Modern Art.

Organisers hope the bridge, the first to be built across the Thames in more than a century, will be finished in time for the opening of the Bankside gallery in spring 2000.

Sir Norman said yesterday: "We are delighted with the news. It's a great honour."

The competition attracted 226 entries from around the world, and was



Sir Anthony Caro: 'It will be a beautiful addition to city'

unusual in inviting combined designs from architects and artists.

Sir Anthony said: "I feel great, I'm delighted with the announcement. I just want to get on with it now and hopefully it will get built soon. It will be a tremendously beautiful addition to London. It will be a plus."

The pedestrian bridge

competition is one of several London-based bridge-building projects to have been unveiled recently. Others include a scheme to revamp Hungerford Bridge, and a competition for a habitable bridge.

A preliminary application has been made to the Millennium Commission for funding for the estimated £10 million needed to build the bridge. Other funding has proved difficult to find, although the project has the backing of the Corporation of London.

Michael Cassidy, chairman of the corporation's policy and resources committee, said: "This project is crucial for establishing an image for London."

The bridge design is simple, featuring a four-metre wide platform and Sir Anthony's distinctive oxidised metal. There will be a viewing platform offering a sweeping view up to St Paul's Cathedral.

Troubles force up Ulster security bill

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE price of renewed IRA violence and a disastrous summer of civil unrest came home to Northern Ireland yesterday when the Government increased spending on security by £120 million, bringing the total within reach of £1 billion a year.

The security budget is to be increased by £120 million over the next three years, the Northern Ireland Secretary Sir Patrick Mayhew announced yesterday, reversing the "peace dividend" resulting from the IRA and loyalist ceasefires. Deep cuts in many public services have had to be made as a consequence.

Total security spending for 1997-98 will rise to £884 million. Justifying the increase, Sir Patrick said he would have much preferred to have used the money on job creation, schools, hospital and housing, but the IRA and "those responsible for the disturbances which occurred last summer" bore a heavy responsibility.

"The IRA's abominable ending of its ceasefire, witnessed in the bombings earlier this year and recent terrorist atrocities, means that more resources need to be allocated to security and compensation," he said.

"On top of this we have had the cost of the very serious disturbances of last summer. The cost of Drumcree is currently estimated to be £40 million. This constitutes a grievous and wanton self-inflicted wound on the people of this province."



Sir Patrick Mayhew: End of the peace dividend

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A wedding under way in the Old Blacksmith's Shop at Gretna Green, Scotland, a tradition which began in 1792 and is still attracting couples drawn by its romantic history

200 years of runaway success

Kamal Ahmed on the sale of marriage records, right, from Gretna Green, the Scottish village whose romantic history still attracts 4,000 couples a year



The path of true love

IT IS a name heavy with the whiff of scandal and clandestine arrangements. From Lord Thomas Erskine to Sir James Goldsmith, the great and the good have packed their bags and headed north for a taste of its romantic notoriety. A unique insight will be revealed by auctioneers tomorrow into the affairs of Gretna Green, the small Scottish village that was the first port of call for English lovers who wanted to marry without the blessing of their parents. Anderson and Garland, an auction house based in Newcastle upon Tyne, will sell the archive, thought to be the largest private collection of marriage records from Gretna Green to come under the hammer this century. The four hard-bound registers, two soft-bound ledgers and 21 bundles of loose-leaf records are the legacy of the Lang family who set them-

1818 Lord Thomas Erskine, the former Lord Chancellor of England, ran north of the border at the age of 68 to marry his housekeeper, Sarah Buck. Frowned upon by right-thinking English gentlemen, Lord Erskine, who was accused of "opium eating", had already had eight children by a previous marriage. 1826 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a colonial statesman, married Ellen Turner, a 15-year-old heiress. Wakefield was tracked down and arrested for abduction. He was sentenced to three years in prison at Lancaster assizes. The Gretna "priest" was

1831 Marius Goring, the Hollywood actor, married Mary Shiel, although it is not clear why he chose Gretna. He later engaged in a 30-year battle with Equity over rules forbidding actors to visit South Africa. 1953 Sir James Goldsmith married Isabel Patino, the Catholic daughter of a Bolivian tin millionaire. Legend has it that Isabel's father remarked that his family was "not in the habit of marrying Jews", to which Sir James replied: "And we do not marry Red Indians."

1826 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a colonial statesman, married Ellen Turner, a 15-year-old heiress. Wakefield was tracked down and arrested for abduction. He was sentenced to three years in prison at Lancaster assizes. The Gretna "priest" was

1826 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a colonial statesman, married Ellen Turner, a 15-year-old heiress. Wakefield was tracked down and arrested for abduction. He was sentenced to three years in prison at Lancaster assizes. The Gretna "priest" was

such as these have been auctioned on the open market," said Andrew McCoull, of Anderson and Garland. "They are the earliest records of marriages from Gretna Green and there has been fantastic interest in the collection which is considered a historical treasure of Britain's rich past." David Lang was the first self-styled priest, setting up in 1792. With no formal training or church backing, it was his job to note down the names of those who wanted to get married and the witnesses, all that was needed for an official marriage in Scotland at the time. He was taking advantage of the 1754 Act of Parliament which made it illegal to hold unlicensed weddings in England. Before then "Fleet" marriages, named after the taverns of Fleet Street in London where they took place, were the refuge of those who did not want their marriages announced to the general public, particularly to avoid the wrath of parents. Mr Lang did a roaring trade at Gretna. He handed on his burgeoning business to his son, Simon, and from there it was handed on to his grandson, William. The records of the marriages read like a great and good of English nineteenth century society. In 1818 Mr Lang conducted the marriage of Lord Thomas Erskine, the former Lord Chancellor of England who ran away with his housekeeper, Sarah Buck, at the age of 68. His sons from a previous marriage were so opposed to the union that they attempted to have their father committed to a mental institution to prevent it. Lord Erskine managed to avoid his sons during his race

to Scotland by dressing as a woman. In 1826 Mr Lang married Edward Gibbon Wakefield, described as a "colonial statesman", to the 15-year-old heiress, Ellen Turner. Wakefield was later found guilty of abduction after a trial at Lancaster and sentenced to three years in prison. During the nineteenth century, Parliament attempted to close the Gretna loophole by insisting that people who married there had been resident in Scotland for at least three weeks. Couples simply slept rough or stayed at inns for the qualification period. The village's advantage over England remained until 1969 when the need for parental consent to marriage for those under 21 south of the

border was repealed, bringing English and Scots law into line. Others married at Gretna include the Hollywood actor Marius Goring, to Mary Shiel, and Sir James Goldsmith, who married Isabel Patino, the daughter of a Bolivian tin millionaire. Although having no legal advantage, Gretna remains popular among the romantically inclined. Last year nearly 4,000 people were married there. It has the only registry office in Scotland to make a profit. "I suppose it is the romance of all those couples who were married before at Gretna Green," said Susan Clark, director of the village's museum. "That is a very special thing."

Leah Betts died after ignoring drug advice

Alan Watkins

LEAH Betts, the Essex teenager who died after taking an ecstasy tablet during her 18th birthday party, was advised by the friend who gave it to her to take only half, the the tablet, a jury at Norwich crown court heard yesterday. Sarah Cargill, aged 18, said she was concerned that the tablet was stronger than the ecstasy which Leah had previously taken. But she said Leah ignored her advice and swallowed the whole pill. She collapsed into a coma three hours later and died in November last year.

Analysis had shown there was nothing chemically wrong with the tablet Leah had taken and that she had fallen victim to the arbitrary nature of the drug. The court heard that Miss Cargill had obtained the drug through a network of friends after it had been bought from an unknown dealer at a Basildon night club. Steven Packman, aged 18, of Laindon, Essex, pleaded not guilty to supplying a prohibited drug. Andrew Williams, prosecuting, said Packman was not being charged with culpability in Leah's death but with being involved in the supply. Mr Williams told the jury that Packman purchased the tablets from the dealer and passed them to Stephen Smith, aged 18, who has already admitted his involvement and will be sentenced later.

chain of supply and had been cautioned by police. Miss Cargill had approached Miss Yexley a few days before Leah's party to ask Smith to get tablets. Initially he was reluctant, but then agreed to do so. Smith asked Packman to try and obtain them for him. Packman purchased them at the night club and passed them to Smith hidden in a matchbox. Miss Cargill said she and Leah had initially started to experiment with drugs at the beginning of 1995, first with "things like cannabis", then with whizz — amphetamine. They had also tried LSD and on four previous occasions had taken ecstasy. "As far as I am aware (Leah) done exactly the same as me at the same times," Miss Cargill said.

A statement from Leah's father, Paul Betts, a former police inspector, read to the court described the birthday party as going "quite nicely" until they were told their daughter was upstairs feeling unwell. Her stepmother quickly realised that Leah had taken something and she admitted swallowing an ecstasy tablet which she said had been supplied to her by Smith. After Leah's death, her father and stepmother, Janet Betts, launched a nationwide campaign to warn other young people of the dangers of drugs, and to raise funds to set up an advice line for teenagers. The trial continues.



Leah Betts: Took fatal dose of ecstasy at birthday party

Six army officers accused of rape

College men charged following complaint by civilian student

Luke Harding Six army officers at one of Britain's most prestigious military colleges will appear in court today charged with raping a civilian student. The men — two captains, a lieutenant and three cadets — were arrested by Ministry of Defence detectives following a complaint four weeks ago. The complainant is believed to be in her early 20s and was allegedly raped after entering an accommodation block where the men were having a sauna. The officers will appear before magistrates in Wantage, Oxfordshire, charged with raping the student at the Royal Military College, at Shrivenham, Wiltshire, six months ago. The officers are all serving with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and are aged 20-28. Five appeared before magistrates last Wednesday. Three were sent to a remand centre and two to prison. A sixth officer will appear today after being arrested in North Yorkshire last month and granted conditional bail. A spokesman for MoD police, Rob Need, said: "Six

army officers have been arrested and charged with rape at the college. They were arrested by officers on December 3 for an offence on May 27." The officers have been named as Lieutenant Matthew James Tupling, aged 23, of Bordon, Hampshire, Cadet Andrew John Stout, 20, of Whitcham, Tyneside, Cadet Darren Bartlett, 23, of Arborfield, Berkshire, Cadet Nicholas Oettinger, 20, of Preston, Lancashire, Captain Philip James Bates, 25, of Bordon, Hampshire, and Capt Ian Barlow, 28, of Warrisham, Suffolk. The college, which teaches civilians and military personnel, specialises in management, science and technology. Research also takes place at the college, which is attached to Cranfield University.

Founded in 1772, it is one of several army staff colleges which play a crucial role in army training and research. The Royal Military College of Science has 3,800 students and is run by a commandant, Major-General Alistair Irwin, CBE, and a principal, Professor Phil Hutchinson. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers contains the craftsmen who keep the military machine running smoothly. It has specialists, including mechanics and computer operators, attached to most regiments who have been vital to many successful military operations. Old boys include the Duke of York, who served at Shrivenham six years ago before taking up the command of HMS Collingwood.

I can only infer that Julian Lewis thinks it wrong for an employee of the Conservative Party to disagree with government policy, but quite acceptable for a Conservative candidate to stand for election while refusing to endorse the party's manifesto. Logic has never been his strong suit.

When's World G2 page 7

Radio tribute to music of 20th century

Dan Glaister Arts correspondent

CLASSIC FM it is not. Radio 3 yesterday launched Sounding The Century, an ambitious three-year festival to celebrate the music of the 20th century. But reflecting the station's unashamedly pro-active bent, many unfamiliar names will figure in the programme of concerts, operas, documentaries and premieres. Ligeti, Pärt and Knussen will feature for air time with Elgar, Mahler, Stravinsky and Stockhausen.

"The whole aim is to expand people's horizons," the Radio 3 controller, Nicholas Kenyon, said launching the project. "We're saying that we believe in every one of these pieces. They all reflect something important about our century. Twentieth century music is wonderful and it is right that the BBC should celebrate it."

The festival will open next February with a performance of Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring* conducted by Pierre Boulez at the South Bank Centre.

Highlights include *The Stabat Mater*, a series looking at one of the century's key composers; a Century Of Singers, a weekly survey of 100 great singers of the

20th century; and 100 Cultural Contributions, an attempt to amass a cultural library or canon of the century's most significant cultural contributions.

Several premieres will take place as part of the festival, which aims to involve every orchestra in the country and feature both British and foreign composers and performers. Pierre Boulez's explosive/fixe will receive its first London performance, conducted by the organiser of the festival, the composer George Benjamin.

But perhaps the most alarming premiere will be an opera by Nicholas Maw of the pop philosophy best seller, *Sophie's Choice*, described by one critic as "Playboy goes to Auschwitz". Already a film and a book, Sophie's choice is a joint commission by Radio 3 and the Royal Opera House, and is scheduled for the opening season of the refurbished Royal Opera House.

George Benjamin said yesterday: "It is a complex project but its object is simple: to reflect the wonders of music in this century. There will be a lot of work that has been neglected but deserves to be heard."

But Mr Benjamin was insistent that only 20th century music would be heard. "Anything written in 1895 doesn't have a chance."

Six notables

EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934): English composer who went from regional obscurity to international fame in the first decade of the century. Perhaps the



first great composer to realise the possibilities of the gramophone, making many recordings of his own work. His music combines an epic nobility with popular lightness. One of his best known works: *Land Of Hope And Glory* (1902).

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971): he was often criticised during his lifetime for what some musicians perceived as the "soulless" character of his compositions. But



Stravinsky can now be seen to have worked in and exploited most of the musical styles of the 20th century. He was born in Russia, but he left in 1934 and eventually settled in the United States. His best known work is probably *The Rite Of Spring* (1913).

PIERRE BOULEZ (1925-): French composer, a former chief conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and theorist. He is an experimental composer who



studied harmony under Messiaen. He later went on to develop a distinctive free-form compositional style which leaves many options open to the individual performer. Among his best known works: *Le Marteau sans Maitre* (1953).

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN (1928-): he is baffling but has an enormous following. He evolved a theory of "parameters" and divided music into moments of time,



mixing electronic noise with musical instruments. He introduced an element of chance in some of his compositions which culminated with *Zyklus* (1959), in which the performer can start at any one of 17 pages. Best known work: *Stimmung* (1968).

GYORGY LIGETI (1923-): the Hungarian composer. His is currently the name to drop in contemporary classical music circles. One of the century's most inventive and original



composers, he has been influenced by sources as diverse as medieval music, Hungarian folk-song, jazz, minimalism and African music. He is probably best known for his composition *Clock And Clouds* which he completed in 1972/3.

ARVO PÄRT (1935-): Another unfamiliar name that will figure in the Radio 3 programmes. He is an Estonian composer with a background in radio. His early work was influenced by Prokofiev and Shostakovich. His later work shows great mobility of style. It incorporates Gregorian



chant and experimental rhythmic organisation. His best known work is the *Third Symphony*.



Philip Jones Griffiths, who worked for the Guardian in the 1960s, with one of his most famous images from Vietnam. An exhibition of his photojournalism opens at the National Museum and Gallery in Cardiff tomorrow. PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF MORGAN

Sinking spirits makes spirits sink

Chris Millill Medical Correspondent

A QUICK drink to lift the spirits may seem a good idea at the time, but it is a dangerous strategy as alcohol can cause depression and lead to a vicious cycle of excessive consumption, doctors warned yesterday. A leaflet from the Royal College of Psychiatrists and General Practitioners says that heavy drinking will cause depression, not cure it, and that many people suffering from depression who drink heavily may have the bottle to blame for their condition rather than other factors such as bereavement. Bruce Ritson, chairman of the Royal College of Psychiatrists' substance abuse section, said there was growing knowledge about the biochemical changes in the brain caused by alcohol. Heavy drinking could cause changes in cell membranes in the brain which affected chemical transmitters such as serotonin, which controlled mood. He said this partly explained the edginess in people with hangovers, and also partly explained the craving for drink in people trying to give it up. However, Dr Ritson, a consultant at the Royal Edinburgh hospital, said the brain cell changes would repair themselves in 10 days to a month after people stopped drinking. He added: "Overcoming the drinking problems often produces a rapid improvement in well-being and resolution of the depression."

He said around one in 10 patients going to family doctors had some form of depressive illness, and about 5 per cent of the population probably had drinking problems. Among those with diagnosed drinking problems, half of females and a third of males suffered from serious depression. Suicide was seven times more common among people with alcohol problems. "A surprising number of people do not make the link between drinking and depression, but alcohol is a depressant drug," said Dr Ritson. "A soft drink's claim to be a miracle hangover cure was yesterday strongly disputed by the drinks industry, writes Alex Bellis, chairman of the Soft Drinks Association and the Portman Group in a joint statement. The three groups called for public analysis to carry out a study on the bitter lemon-tasting drink and for trading standards officers to consider the claims being made for it."

As speeding up the breakdown of alcohol, with importers Free-Party Marketing claiming drinkers sober up faster and may avoid a hangover. But three associations rounded on the claim, saying that it was not substantiated on medical grounds. "In 2,000 years of alcohol production no known way of speeding up the breakdown of alcohol within the body has been found. It takes one hour for one unit of alcohol to be broken down by the liver," said Alcohol Concern, the British Soft Drinks Association and the Portman Group in a joint statement. The three groups called for public analysis to carry out a study on the bitter lemon-tasting drink and for trading standards officers to consider the claims being made for it.

Police again fail to find victim of car crash

Viviek Chaudhary

A POLICE force which was criticised for failing to find the body of a woman following a car crash said yesterday that it failed to detect another accident, in which a youth died, because of fog.

Bedfordshire police admitted it took them more than an hour to reach the scene of last Friday's crash, in which Richard Horricks, aged 17, was killed, after a patrol car took a wrong turn in the fog.

It is believed that Mr Horricks was still alive when his crashed car was spotted in a field at Bletsoe, north Bedfordshire, by Ministry of Defence security officers. They did not stop to investigate.

After police failed to find the car they contacted the security officers again to check its location. It was found that the car had been driven for a further 200 yards before Mr Horricks collapsed and died. Mr Horricks, who lived at Riseley, north Bedfordshire, was an A level student at Sharnbrook Upper School, where his twin sister is also a pupil. He was returning from a night out with friends when the crash occurred.

In May 1995, two Bedfordshire officers failed to find the body of Sally London, aged 39, who died after her car crashed into a field.

She was discovered 24 hours later by a member of the public. The two officers concerned were dismissed but were reinstated earlier this year following an appeal to the Home Secretary.

A Bedfordshire police spokesman said yesterday that there were no similarities between the two cases and that there were no plans to investigate or discipline the two officers sent out to investigate last Friday's accident.

He added: "We received a telephone call saying that there was an abandoned vehicle in a field. There was total fog, which made it difficult to find the car. The family of the dead man, who know the area

well, spent three hours looking for him and couldn't find him. But we are looking into the management of the incident."

At a press conference, Anthony Howlett-Brown, assistant chief constable, said: "I think with the benefit of hindsight there are things we would like to have done, like getting back to the MoD at an earlier stage."

"If it had been reported as an accident or injury accident, clearly more would have been done at the time. I have called for a full report."

A police statement said that two officers were sent from Greyfriars police station in Bedford to deal with last Friday's call. "Unfortunately in the first turn to Thurlough and was unable to locate the car. As he was unable to find what he believed was a routine incident of an abandoned car, a decision was taken to return to search in daylight the next day."

Following further information an hour later, Greyfriars control room contacted the MoD security and asked them to verify the location.

"When the security officers returned to the scene, they found the car had moved 200 yards towards the A6. The driver had collapsed nearby and was later pronounced dead."

In the previous two weeks there had been 170 reported cases of abandoned vehicles.

Mr Horricks's stepfather, John Kingsford, aged 45, yesterday said: "The policeman concerned was 21, not much older than Richard. It would be wrong to blame him for what happened."

He added: "I do find it incredible, though, that the MoD staff drove past the car without stopping. Richard suffered terrible injuries and we have been told they would have proved fatal in any case."

Richard's mother Avril, aged 48, said: "It is terrible for us and must be for the security officers who drove past the car."

£4m of army ammunition reported missing in Bosnia

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

A BREAKDOWN in proper accounting procedures for guns, drugs and ammunition among the 14,500 British troops sent to Bosnia could allow valuable weapons and ammunition to fall into the hands of criminals and rival militias, a National Audit Office report reveals today.

It discloses that the Ministry of Defence is urgently investigating what has happened to £4 million of ammunition stockpiled in a Bosnia base where there has been no stocktaking for 17 months.

Auditors sent to Bosnia by Parliament's financial watchdog found "there had been a breakdown in the controls over ammunition in particular" while computers had not been able to keep track of medical supplies and stores. Fears that large sums of hard currency could fall into the wrong hands had also led to a cut from £5 million to £3.5 million in the amount of German marks and US dollars held in cash to pay for services in Bosnia where the banking system had collapsed.

"Security precautions are vital where large amounts of cash are held or transported. This is particularly the case in Bosnia, where the Ministry of Defence are concerned about criminal activity and the availability of weapons."

There had been considerable concern that 452 billion anti-tank missiles worth \$6 million could have gone missing. But after inquiries among the units, the missiles were found and accounting procedures were blamed.

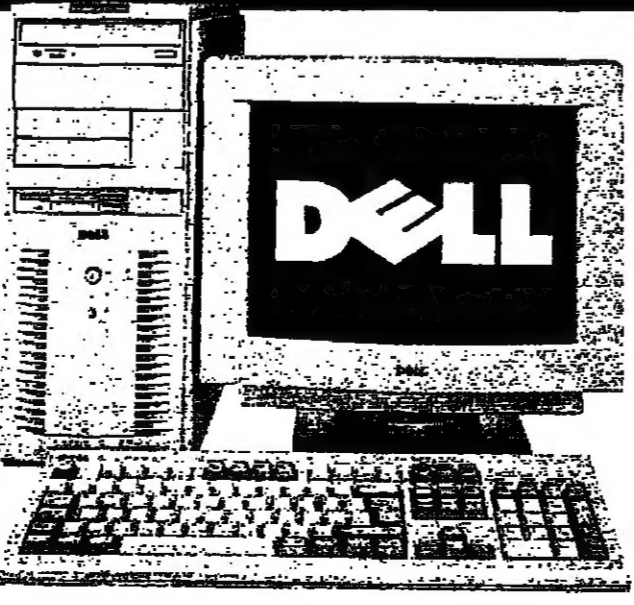
Another inquiry founded that only 280 of 500 consignments of ammunition distributed to the troops had been properly receipted. In Croatia, vouchers authorising the issue of medical supplies, including morphine and codeine, were missing but another accounting error was blamed.

Other problems included severe difficulties in carrying out repairs to the various models of Land Rovers in use; and high prices paid for chartering ships to take the troops and supplies to Bosnia.

MoD: The Financial Management of the Military Operation in the former Yugoslavia; Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General; Stationery Office, £8.95.

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صحننا من الامل

Kathy Evans in Doha talks to the woman emerging from the twilight zone into a role in public life as part of the Gulf's first royal team

'First lady' of Arabia opens door for women

A WIFE of the Gulf's youngest ruler is taking the first tentative steps towards a role in public life, after centuries in which such women have been, officially, almost non-existent.

The royal purdah is about to be broken by Sheikha Moza bint Nasser al-Misned, who is married to the Qatari emir, Sheik Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani.

At the moment, she can best be described as being in the twilight zone of public life. The sheikha, who is in her thirties, has not yet appeared on television and still forbids photographs. On the other hand, she has just made for Qatar, such a landmark visit to the United States.

Travelling with a group of

Qatari women graduates, she had meetings with a number of male politicians, including former president George Bush, former secretary of state James Baker and the Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich.

Travelling unaccompanied by a close male relative, and having public meetings with men, is unprecedented for the spouse of a Gulf ruler. Women royals of Arabia rarely have contact with men apart from members of their own family.

Although not on state business officially, Sheikha Moza was investigating the possibility of establishing an American university for the educational foundation she has formed in Qatar. Such a university would have national importance to the emirate.

Since becoming the emirate's first lady, she has cut a figure sharply in contrast with many other wives of rulers on the Arabian peninsula. She has a BSc in sociology

'A lot of women now need to work to help their families'

from Qatar university, speaks fluent English and works out four times a week. Her status among the emir's three wives — she is the second and youngest — was recently reconfirmed by the appointment of her son Jassim, aged 18, as the crown prince.

She is also a beauty. Tall and willowy, with black eyes and hair, Sheikha Moza cuts a new style among the Gulf royals, known for their overdressing. For her first interview with a British journalist, she wore a simple full-length Armani suit in muted grey-blue tones, a white blouse and three-inch heels.

"Times are changing. The subject of women is no longer taboo," she said. "God created us to be equal and there is no reason why they shouldn't share the same work as men."

Sheikha Moza's emergence coincides with growing confusion in the Gulf about the role and identity of women. Although guaranteed an education, many are pushing for an end to segregation in offices and restrictions on certain careers in some states. With

recent austerity measures, a number of women also find that they need to work.

Others still prefer the Gulf stereotype of endless shopping sprees or seclusion at home.

Local television provides no guidance or role models. Women are either slugs wearing slit dresses and heavy doses of lip gloss, or appear as subservient wives and mothers in soap operas.

"The image on television is not correct. We have a lot of women now who need to work to help their families and this is not being reflected. First, the women of the Gulf have to identify our goals. We have to learn our capabilities and believe in ourselves. Once we do that, we can achieve anything," said Sheikha Moza.

Western-style feminism was not suitable for the Gulf, she added. "I don't want our women to fall into the trap of foreign concepts. It is against our culture that women live

'Change has to come gradually and naturally to avoid a reaction'

independently and separately from their families," she said. "Change also has to come gradually and naturally to avoid a reaction."

Sheikha Moza's emergence has been possible only because of her husband. The sheikha, aged 46, is first of the

Gulf leaders to have been born in the post-oil generation and, since coming to power 18 months ago, has encouraged open political debate on previously taboo subjects. Gulf rulers have reacted uncomfortably to his new style of leadership.

The sheikha's activities could prove even more worrying to them. Next year, she is planning to hold the region's first convention of Gulf women to discuss their role in the workplace and the family. Speakers will include leading women academics from the US and Britain, public figures and representatives of women's groups around the Gulf.

Asked if the convention would discuss controversial subjects, such as the right to drive, work and travel freely,

Sheikha Moza replied: "Ideas may emerge which are controversial, but this is normal, isn't it? I hope to create good waves."

At home, many Qatari and diplomats are wondering whether the emirate is witnessing the emergence of the Gulf's first "royal team". She and her husband talk affectionately about each other (unheard of in the Gulf) and Sheikha Moza frequently refers to "we" in talking about the government's priorities.

Since becoming first lady, she has established a foundation for science education and social development, which works with the mentally handicapped. It led her to have frequent contacts with male doctors and academics. "I see them when it is necessary," she said.

Israel approves 132 homes in Arab Jerusalem

Styram Bhatia in Jerusalem

ISRAELI city planners in Jerusalem yesterday approved 132 Jewish homes being built in the centre of an Arab neighbourhood.

Palestinians, including several of Yasser Arafat's officials, warned last night that the plan would unleash a wave of violence reminiscent of the bloody clashes which followed the opening of an archaeological tunnel near the al-Aqsa mosque in September.

The Jewish enclave, which will be partly financed by an American millionaire, Irving Moskowitz, is to be built in the Ras al-Amoud neighbourhood in Arab east Jerusalem.

Israel's minister of interior, Eliyahu Sulis, announced the decision and defended the right of Jews to live in any part of Jerusalem. But he added: "We will also build homes for Arabs. There is no reason why the Arabs should react angrily."

A special committee set up by the interior ministry had delayed implementing the plan for several years. Earlier this week, it heard objections from Arab landowners who compared the decision to opening a discotheque in the heart of an ultra-orthodox Jewish neighbourhood.

Nuha Elghoul, a Palestinian headmistress who lives in Ras al-Amoud, said the Israeli government was making "a

big mistake" by allowing Jews to settle among more than 15,000 Arabs.

"This is discrimination," she said. "On the one hand, they prevent the Arabs from building homes, but on the other they allow Jews to build freely in Arab Jerusalem."

The Palestinian minister for Jerusalem affairs, Feisal Husseini, sharply criticised the scheme and said it was part of Israel's unrelenting effort to Judaise Arab Jerusalem, where more than 160,000 Jews have settled since the 1967 Middle East war.

The speaker of the Palestinian legislative council, Ahmed Qureia, warned: "This is an attempt to kill the peace process. It is very dangerous and Israel should expect a reaction."

Israel's Peace Now movement also feared that the decision would lead to renewed violence.

The Palestinians also accuse Israel of finding ways to drive out Jerusalem's 150,000 Arab residents: hundreds of families recently lost their right to remain in the city because Israel claimed they had chosen to live outside Jerusalem's boundaries.

Arab women from Jerusalem who married foreign nationals have also been told their residence rights have been cancelled. This affects several thousand women who have married men from the West Bank or Palestinian men living in Jordan.



Palestinian demonstrators pray in front of a bulldozer yesterday after they stopped it being used by Jewish settlers trying to claim land in the Jordan Valley PHOTOGRAPH: RULA HALAWANI

Bolger remakes NZ coalition

Gilene Wilson in Wellington

AFTER two months of post-electoral manoeuvring New Zealand's National Party prime minister, Jim Bolger, has formed a coalition with the nationalist New Zealand First, depriving the Labour leader Helen Clark of the opportunity of becoming the country's first woman prime minister.

But the stability of the partnership with NZF's Maori leader Winston Peters — a one-time National cabinet minister and for three years a fierce opponent of his former party — must be in doubt.

It was Mr Peters who announced yesterday that the conservative National Party had beaten Labour for his support in forming a coalition — a remarkable volte face for the man who campaigned on the promise that a vote for him would put Mr Bolger and his finance minister, Bill Birch, out of office.

Now he is to be Mr Bolger's number two as deputy prime minister and treasurer — the latter a new and so far undefined post, although Mr Bolger said yesterday that the budget would be in Mr Peters' hands.

Mr Bolger played down past acrimony between Mr Peters and himself, accepting that journalists would recall the insults which the two have

traded but saying that it was "not bitter".

The agreement puts Mr Peters at risk of losing the support of Maori voters, who ended a 60-year association with Labour to back him. Many may go back to Labour but he has not been seen proposing a National government.

Mr Peters is widely thought to have chosen National because he reckons that the social policy concessions he was able to gain from it will be more attractive at the next election than anything he could achieve in coalition with Labour.

The concessions include the promise of higher spending on health, education, law and order, and pensions.

If these can be delivered without damage to the economy, NZF will be in a good position to make gains at the next election — providing that it has not irreparably splintered by then.

Mr Peters announced his decision at a press conference without even telling Mr Bolger what he and his MPs had decided. He claimed that there was a "massive consensus" for joining forces with National.

An angry Helen Clark said: "It's not only a major disappointment for us, it's a major disappointment for New Zealanders who voted for a government of change. Many will see it as a betrayal."

Computer firm ordered to pay \$6m for wrist injuries

Ian Katz in New York

AJURY in Brooklyn has ordered the computer manufacturer Digital Equipment to pay \$6 million (\$3.75 million) in damages to three office workers who claimed that they had suffered repetitive stress injury as a result of using the company's keyboards.

The case was hailed yesterday as a legal landmark.

The women's lawyer, Steven Phillips, said it was the first such claim to succeed in court.

"We've settled cases before and we've tried cases that have lost," he said.

He told the court Digital knew some of its keyboards could cause a form of repetitive stress injury (RSI) known as carpal tunnel syndrome but did nothing to help its customers minimize the risk to their employees.

Digital said in a statement that there was no scientific evidence that keyboards caused injuries of the kind suffered by the three women, and said it would seek to have the decision overturned.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a condition in which tissue in the wrist becomes inflamed and exerts pressure on nerves. Victims suffer from chronic pain and may ultimately lose the use of their hands.

Patricia Geresty, aged 50, a secretary and the most severely injured of the women, has had four operations since she began suffering from the condition.

The jury awarded her almost \$6.4 million.

Jill Jackson, aged 42, a legal secretary whose elbow was affected, was awarded \$366,000. The third woman, a hospital billing clerk, received \$278,000.

The jury appears to have been swayed by evidence that Digital operated its own in-house programme to prevent RSI, but made no attempt to warn other employers of the dangers it had recognised.

"They knew how to fix the problem and they kept quiet so they could sell their equipment," Mr Phillips said.

Employers in the United States pay out \$60 billion a year in compensation to employees suffering from RSI, but until now no computer company has been held liable for injuries caused by using its machines.

In other cases this year juries absolved IBM of any responsibility for injuries suffered by workers using its machines.

Legal experts warned yesterday that the Digital judgment could prove to be "an aberration".

Saddam fails to hit right button to satisfy West

David Hirst in Beirut reports on a day of propaganda, theatre and confusion as Iraq switches the oil back on

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein braved driving rain yesterday to preside over celebrations to mark Iraq's long-awaited "return to the world oil market".

But it appears that when he threw the switch that should have set the oil flowing for the first time in six years, nothing happened.

Reports said this embarrassing setback, kept hidden from the Iraqi people, was caused by an untimely power failure in the oil-producing region of Kirkuk, 160 miles north of Baghdad.

But in New York, sources at the United Nations said that Iraq had aborted the pumping operation because it realised it had jumped the gun on starting the flow before the UN had approved any contracts for delivery of oil.

They disputed reports that the oil flow was interrupted because of a technical fault on the pipeline.

President Saddam switched on the pipelines at 11.25am, after arriving unexpectedly at an outdoor ceremony in Kirkuk marking what Iraq's official news agency said was the "return of Iraqi oil to world markets".

His appearance in military fatigues, with senior government officials, led to carefully staged jubilation among those present, who included hundreds of Iraqi citizens.

Official media reports on the president's arrival froze currency dealings amid expectations that the news would significantly strengthen the dinar and cut food prices. But no reports appeared locally on the pitch in oil pumping.

Under the "oil-for-food" deal, Iraq can export \$3 billion (\$1.25 billion) of oil every six months; half the

proceeds will go on food, medicine and humanitarian assistance.

The Iraqi government will buy the food, which will then be distributed under UN supervision throughout Iraq and in the Western-protected Kurdish north.

The pumping of Iraqi oil has been dogged by delays, caused mainly by US-Iraqi

disputes over the interpretation of the UN-sponsored agreement, and by US anger at President Saddam's military incursion into Kurdistan in September.

A diplomat in Baghdad said the Iraqi people "will conclude that there is a beginning of a change only when the first truckloads of food actually arrive". That could take up to three months.

But for the regime, at least, yesterday was to have been an occasion for rejoicing. The president clearly intended to make the most of it — he rarely leaves his palaces.

The morning newspapers had set the reverent and jubilant tone. "Yes to Saddam

Hussein, who broke the sanctions and set Iraq's oil free," said al-Jumhuriyah. "The people's beloved one said it ... prosperity is on the way," said al-Qadisiya.

The deal promises to ease the people's increasingly desperate plight. But for the regime it is more than that.

For the past two weeks, officials have been confidently forecasting that the deal is a prelude to the lifting of UN sanctions.

The president's plan to preside over the switching-on ceremony had not been announced in advance. The official news agency, announcing the visit in a four-line urgent report from the ceremony, said he had "recessed the button in Kirkuk's Number One pumping station at 11.25am, declaring the return of Iraqi oil to world markets".

At first it appeared that the president's late arrival had caused a delay in starting the pumps, but later in the day, at Ceyhan, 600 miles away on the Mediterranean, officials of the Turkish oil company Botas said there was no sign of the oil. They attributed this to a power failure in Kirkuk.

The official Iraqi media breathed no word of the problem, and journalists taken to Kirkuk were not informed.

The pumping failure did not stop popular festivities — dancing and folk-song — from going ahead. But, curiously, there were no accounts of President Saddam appearing before his grateful and joyous people.

Britain is furious over the US decision to withdraw 1,000 mostly Kurdish personnel from working with American-based or financed charities in northern Iraq, arguing that this sends the wrong message to President Saddam about the West's commitment to protect the Kurdish area, *Iran Black in London reports*.

The US decision is also certain to affect the UN's food distribution plans now getting under way.

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Research shows that charitable giving by the very wealthy is directly tied to the tax rate. The dominant urge seems to give it to charity rather than let the government get hold of it.
Charles Nevin
G2 page 4

صبراً من الامل

Historic moment for rainbow state

Mandela seals the new South Africa

Ruaradh Nicoll in Sharpeville

NELSON MANDELA put South Africa on firm foundations yesterday when he signed the new constitution into existence on the historic and sun-soaked earth of Sharpeville.

It marked the end of six tough years of negotiations.

"It's the end of 344 years of struggle for national unity and lasting peace," said Cyril Ramaphosa, chairman of the constitutional assembly, as he passed the 150-page black-bound document to his president.

"We solemnly honour the pledge we made to ourselves and to the world, that South Africa shall redeem herself and thereby widen the frontiers of human freedom," Mr Mandela said, pausing while six military helicopters, trailing the South African flag, flew past.

The constitution is based on a bill of rights which upholds an array of entitlements. It is an extraordinary creation, guaranteeing gay rights and coming close to outlawing censorship. But it has contentious passages. There were mumbled about its disdain for federalism, but these died down after the constitutional court ordered Mr Ramaphosa's assembly to redraft the document earlier this year.

Once into his address, Mr Mandela departed from the text prepared by those he refers to as his "bosses" and began to speak from the heart. He said South Africa must be controlled by South Africans and he went on to talk of his "unshakable determination that respect for human life and liberty be enshrined as right and beyond any power to diminish."

His audience had streamed into the George Thabane football stadium in Sharpeville, past the guns of soldiers brought in to ensure the peace.

Once on the terraces, they quickly framed the pitch with brightly coloured umbrellas to escape the intense sun.

'It's the end of 344 years of struggle for national unity and lasting peace'

Cyril Ramaphosa

'We solemnly honour the pledge we made to ourselves and to the world, that South Africa shall redeem herself and thereby widen the frontiers of freedom'

'We will redeem the faith which fired those whose blood drenched the soil of Sharpeville and elsewhere in our country and beyond'

Nelson Mandela

Mr Mandela was joined on stage by many of the country's leaders. Although the National Party's F. W. de Klerk was absent, the signing was watched by a group who survived the 1990 Sharpeville massacre, in which 69 people died.

The slaughter — which turned the eyes of the world on apartheid — provided the backdrop to the ceremony.

Earlier yesterday Mr Mandela spent hours at the site of the shooting, where he unveiled a plaque. It said: "Those who gave their lives for a free and just South Africa."

After signing the constitution, Mr Mandela called on South Africans to pay tribute to the victims of apartheid by moving jointly towards peace.

"We will redeem the faith which fired those whose blood drenched the soil of Sharpeville and elsewhere in our country and beyond," he said.

"Today we humbly pay tribute to them in a special way. This is a monument to their heroism."

The British received a special mention. Sharpeville is part of Vereeniging where, on May 31 1960, the British and the Boers signed a treaty which led to the Union of South Africa, thereby disenfranchising the black population for 89 years.

"Today we reclaim the unity that the Vereeniging of nine decades ago sought to deny," Mr Mandela said.

"We give life to our nation's prayer for freedom regained and a continent reborn."

There were many who echoed that sentiment as the crowd watched their political leaders drive away.

South Africa's truth commission pardoned one of apartheid's most notorious killer policemen yesterday, a decision likely to test the limits of national reconciliation.

Brian Mitchell, the former policeman serving a 30-year sentence for the murder of 11 people in 1969, was granted amnesty by Bishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and walked free from jail hours later.



Nelson Mandela signs the new constitution into law yesterday, watched by Cyril Ramaphosa, chairman of the constitutional assembly. The ceremony was held in Sharpeville, where 69 people were massacred in 1960

Greek farmers dig in for a fight to the finish

Helena Smith in Athens

GREEK farmers who have left the country in chaos with their fortnight-long rail and road blockade rejected a government olive branch last night and dug in for indefinite warfare.

An emergency cabinet meeting failed to resolve the worst revolt in modern Greek history but announced that the prime minister, Costas Simitis, was willing to negotiate.

Mr Simitis insisted, however, that the farmers demand for billions of drachmas could not be met.

The farmers complain that the government's budget, designed to meet the European Union criteria for a single currency, is too stringent.

In a nationally televised address, Mr Simitis promised to sit down with the farmers and talk if they first removed the 100-plus blockades they have erected across the main and secondary roads and railways.

But the farmers, meeting at their headquarters in Larissa, immediately rejected the offer, described it as a "provocation" and vowed to continue the blockade "until the bitter end".

"The government has done nothing to meet our demands and therefore we will not be withdrawing," said a statement by Thanassis Nasikas, a leading member of the farmers' committee.

"Our decision is that we will continue our struggle and call on more farmers to join the blockade... The premier hasn't figured out what's happening here."

Many of the farmers have described the blockade as a "holy war" they will fight to the end.

Innumerable lorries, including hundreds from Britain, have been trapped by the barricades, which have cut the country in half and sealed its international borders.

"I understand the problems of those working in the agricultural sector, who Pasok [the governing Socialist Party] has always supported, and the government is willing to discuss them," Mr Simitis said.

"But demands for billions [of drachmas] cannot be satisfied. To do so would be a step backwards. It would mean we would miss the targets we have set to enable Greece to play a role in the European Union."

The blockade has shut scores of northern factories and left many towns and cities short of food.

Yesterday the lorry drivers' union pleaded with the farmers to lift the siege, saying that thousands of foreign truckers were suffering severe hardship and had reached the point of despair.

With Greece braced for a barrage of public service strikes in the next 10 days, also in protest at the austerity programme, Mr Simitis avoided saying how he would lift the blockade if the farmers rejected his offer.

He has said he could rather his government fell than give into the farmers' demands.

Mr Nasikas said the farmers could mobilise thousands more to join the battle against the government's "criminal European Union budget" if they wanted to.

Embryonic euro may be born into broken home

Ian Traynor in Bonn reports that the monetary union partnership looks like coming unstuck

THE monetary marriage between France and Germany which was expected to produce a baby euro at the beginning of 1999 suddenly looks to be on the rocks.

After a year of wrangling over the terms of economic and monetary union and how the single currency will be run after its launch, the crunch could come tomorrow evening in Dublin when European Union finance ministers meet to thrash out a deal.

They will be trying to balance Germany's insistence on iron-clad fiscal discipline with French-led demands for a more relaxed regime and greater political leeway in setting monetary, fiscal and economic policy.

The two sides failed to bridge their differences at a Franco-German summit in Bavaria on Monday. President Jacques Chirac of France took a public potshot at the German financial elite by stressing that the independence of the future European central bank had to be matched by a political counterweight.

In short, he argued that France and most other EU countries did not want the single currency run the way Germany, through its powerful and constitutionally independent Bundesbank, runs the mark.

But Bonn, reluctant anyway to sacrifice the mark and not prepared to take chances, will only adopt the euro if it is governed by Bundesbank-style rigour.

Germany is therefore insisting on a stability pact, which would define limits on deficit spending, automatically fine single-currency members who breach the limits, and specify when exceptions could be made.

The Germans shudder at the "politicisation" of monetary policy, fearing it would result in horse-trading among EMU governments, thereby jeopardising monetary stability and weakening the euro.

bank is being fed by the two countries' different histories, cultures, experiences and attitudes.

Senior German officials, fed up with being accused of dictating the terms of the single currency, point out that France came up with EMU as a way of harnessing the strength of the mark while diluting the Bundesbank's influence in the wake of German reunification.

The French hope EMU can destroy the power of the Bundesbank; the Germans will only accept EMU if it is under a bigger and better Bundesbank.

Hans Tietmeyer, the Bundesbank's chief, is becoming the project's pet bogeyman. This week in the German magazine Der Spiegel, a leading French academic lambasted him as a "medieval high priest", and told Germans their dogmatic devotion to monetary stability had become a national religion.

The euro crisis is rooted in the disasters of the 1920s and 1930s when wheelbarrow inflation destroyed the national currency, wiped out savings and paved the way for the rise of the Nazis.

The Bavarian prime minister, Edmund Stoiber, who is the nearest Germany has to a powerful Eurosceptic, is already playing on these fears by insisting that Germany cannot accept will relax its EMU conditions.

Any loosening of the stability pact, he warned on Monday, would leave the European currency less stable than the mark.

"That means inflation, higher interest rates, more unemployment, loss of value," he said. Such talk alarms Germans.

But why, the French implicitly ask, should Germany's fears about the return of the Weimar Republic force us to yoke our economic policy-making to such discipline.

China anoints paradox as powerbroker and pawn

Andrew Higgins concludes his series on Hong Kong with a profile of the man China will put in charge of the former colony

SOON after arriving in Hong Kong in 1983, the man appointed by Deng Xiaoping as China's plenipotentiary in the colony made a less than dazzling discovery.

"I began to realise that the political inclinations of businessmen are usually linked to their business. They lean towards whoever supports them in trade or finance," recalls Xu Jiahua, China's senior official here until 1990.

"I suggested that we use our resources to foster a group of pro-China capitalists."

The theory was quickly put into practice. In 1988, China stepped in to help build out (875 million) in the shipping empire of a Hong Kong family previously far more partial, at least in public, to Taiwan and Princess Grace of Monaco than the cadres of the Chinese Communist Party.

Today, 11 years after Beijing helped set up the world's third biggest corporate bailout (after Chrysler and Lockheed), the businessman saved from bankruptcy will be named as Chris Patten's successor, the first post-colonial chief executive of Hong Kong.

Tung Chee-hwa, or C.H. as he is often called, is 59, a fan of Confucius who sends his children to university in America, a Chinese patriot who left China, a man whose given name means "build China" but who used to cheer on Liverpool Football Club from the Kop.

This morning he will become the pro-China capitalist the Communist Party chooses to run Hong Kong.

"He owes China a big favour, but so do many businessmen," said David Chu, a property millionaire who met Mr Tung when they worked together at a General Electric plant near Boston in 1968.

He sees Mr Tung's intimate connection with China as an asset not a handicap, and knows how to communicate with Chinese leaders. They have a different set of values. Almost like alien beings."

In the weeks preceding his confirmation this morning by a carefully screened 400-member selection committee, Mr Tung has spoken Beijing's language. He emerged from relative obscurity to toe China's line with a consistency and vigour that has alarmed

critics and surprised even some veteran pro-China politicians.

He told the democrats that they must change, warned Tibet support groups to park their bags, echoed Chinese conspiracy theories about "hostile foreign forces", and declined to join those demanding leniency for the Hong Kong journalist Xi Yang, who was jailed for 12 years in China for an interest-free scoop.

"He is going to do what he is told. He is going to be very tough and he will obey orders," said Emily Lau, a democrat member of the legislative council.

"The things he has been saying in the past few weeks tell us that he is tough and through a Communist cadre."

Most of Hong Kong prefers to see a classic conservative, a view Mr Tung has expressed by paying homage to Confucius at a Hong Kong temple and praising traditional values in an 18-page "election" manifesto. An official who knows him suggests that he wants to be "a Hong Kong Lee Kuan-yew" — Singapore's stern, paternalistic elder statesman.

But Mr Tung also has considerable charm and modesty. He waits in the queue at immigration, even in Beijing, and uses a BMW in a city with more Rolls Royces per capita than any other — though the car does carry the less than proletarian badge of the Hong Kong Consul-General, an emblem of his role as honorary consul for Monaco.

A graduate of Liverpool University in marine engineering, he was a regular at Anfield. Last year he watched Liverpool lose to Manchester United at Wembley in the Cup final. He also took to American football during nearly 10 years working in the United States.

Despite his years in Liverpool, San Francisco, Boston and the hybrid east-west city of Hong Kong, he champions the values of the country he left at the age of 12, when his father, C. Y. Tung, the founder of the family shipping fortune, fled Shanghai for Hong Kong just before Mao Zedong's revolution.

for the Betterment of Hong Kong. "He is the only one who, in the eyes of Chinese officials, has not done anything wrong or said anything inappropriate."

But are these the talents needed to preserve the "high degree of autonomy" promised to Hong Kong after July 1 under the formula of "one country, two systems"?

Mr Tung's only experience in government was a four-year stint on Mr Patten's executive council, where he opposed political and most other reforms. Some even challenge his reputation in business, questioning a carefully constructed orthodoxy that he rescued the family shipping empire from his father's excesses.

"The father died in April 1992. The problems did not emerge until 1986 after the sons decided to buy 30 new ships... This is not the father's folly. Things started to go wrong when C.H. and his brother took over," said Stephen Kentwell, an Australian shipping expert who has written a study of the Tung family firm.

But it was the near-collapse of the firm, with more than \$2.5 billion of debt in September 1995, that helped launch Mr Tung's political career. It brought him into the orbit — and trust — of Beijing business interests and officials.

China's role in the bail-out was not formally acknowledged by Mr Tung until two months ago, a revelation attributed to the family's ties to Taiwan. The subject remains sensitive and rarely elicits more than brief answers.

Mr Tung told the South China Morning Post: "If you are trying to get me to suggest I am going to be so grateful [to China], that I will not be looking after Hong Kong people's interests, you know what the answer is."

Those seeking details are told to contact Henry Fok, a shadowy Hong Kong tycoon who acted as the front man for the Chinese rescue operation. Mr Fok, who allegedly made his initial fortune from busting sanctions against China during the Korean War, never gives interviews.

Bankers involved in the rescue plan, which took nearly two years to put together, praise Mr Tung's powers of persuasion and tenacity. But the secrecy surrounding it remains a cause for concern.

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Nato takes tough line with Russia on new members

NATO warned Russia yesterday that it will start admitting new members from central Europe next year whether or not Russia agrees to forge a privileged partnership with the alliance, writes John Palmer in Brussels.

The Nato declaration that its enlargement strategy is now irreversible came as the Russian government restated its opposition to eastward expansion by the alliance.

Before meeting the Russian foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, in Brussels today, Nato foreign ministers announced yesterday that a special summit in Madrid next July would decide which countries should be selected to join first.

But in an attempt to make Nato enlargement more palatable to Moscow, Nato said it had "no intention, no plan and no need to station nuclear weapons on the territory of any new members". It is also expected to reassure Mr Primakov that it has no plans for the permanent stationing of foreign troops on the soil of the first new members, widely tipped to be Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

The Madrid summit is intended to tackle three broad issues which will help share European security well into the next century, it will agree on who should be in the first

wave of new members, it will finalise its military reorganisation to give a much bigger role to its European members and it will also conclude a new Atlantic Partnership Council, designed to link Nato with 40 other countries in western and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Nato also wants to conclude a privileged relationship with both Russia and Ukraine which might include joint action to tackle international crime, nuclear non-proliferation and future peacekeeping missions similar to that in Bosnia.

But although Nato is ready to finalise a legal treaty or charter with Russia, it insists

that Moscow will not be given any veto on the future of the Atlantic alliance. "There were suggestions that the enlargement of Nato should be made conditional on a new agreement with Russia, but that was not acceptable to Nato," Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said in Brussels. "To accept that would be to accept an external veto over Nato."

Mr Rifkind conceded that the first stage of Nato enlargement would be "limited", but he added that the door would not be shut on other prospective members from central and eastern Europe. Referring to the three Baltic states, which will not be included in the initial expansion, Mr

Rifkind pointed out that they were also seeking membership of the European Union.

"Membership of the EU also carries security implications for the Baltic states," he said.

France played down its differences yesterday with the United States on Nato reorganisation, saying its demands that the alliance's European regional commands be put under European officers had been misunderstood. Hervé de Charette, the foreign minister, said France was not asking for the command of Nato's vital southern flank, nor did it want the US Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean to come under foreign command.

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A fatal obsession

Europe is being debated by a narrow elite

TO LISTEN to Teresa Gorman MP in the House of Commons at Question Time yesterday you would think that Europe was now the sole topic in every bar and home in the land. Mrs Gorman and her Conservative Eurosceptic supporters always behave as though the country is bursting to end Britain's membership of the European Union. Yesterday, the Billericay MP nastily told the Prime Minister that "the honest way" to deal with this pent-up wave of opinion was to hold an immediate referendum on Europe. She now intends to force the referendum issue on to the floor of the House in the New Year, though her private member's bill has not a hope of passing into law.

People like Mrs Gorman are in the grip of an obsession. They believe that they speak for the seething mass of British people. That belief is partly what lies behind the two-day debate on Europe which opens in the House of Commons today. This debate is taking place because the Eurosceptics believe that the Government — and the Chancellor in particular — is trying to sell out British sovereignty in the run-up to the European summit in Dublin on Friday. They want to use these two days to tie Mr Clarke's and Mr Major's hands. They genuinely believe that they are engaged in a crusade which is being cheered on by the British — and more specifically the English — people.

Isn't it odd, therefore, that this week's big opportunity to test the temperature over Europe is being absolutely neglected by all wings of the Conservative Party and by most of the political class as well? If there genuinely was a popular debate about Europe in this country — as the Eurosceptics and the right-wing tabloid press try to pretend — then all eyes would be focused on Merseyside West, where there is a European Parliament byelection tomorrow, caused by the death of the sitting

Labour member. In a logical world, here would be a perfectly timed opportunity to listen to the people. If the Eurosceptics were right, such a contest could put real pressure on the Government over Europe. What could be better than a European byelection on the eve of a European summit to force ministers to take notice of the popular will?

And yet, of course, the debate about Europe in Merseyside West is not seething at all. There is more debate in the average Trappist monastery than there is in this byelection. The majority of people are wholly unaware that it is even taking place. They will do exceptionally well in Merseyside West if they manage a turnout of 20 per cent tomorrow. The result, what is more, is an absolute foregone conclusion. Labour will retain the seat by a large majority, while you will need strong binoculars to spot the Tory vote at all.

This is not intended to be a cheap jibe. It is intended to point up the genuine disjunction between the world as politicians like to imagine it and the world as it actually exists. This country ought to be having a healthy and informed debate about its place in Europe. But the debate that is taking place is anything but that. It is a debate among a narrow elite, conducted in narrow terms and almost wholly unrelated to the world as most people experience it. If public opinion was really as aroused as Mrs Gorman pretends, then this pre-Dublin week would see a powerful convergence between what happens in the Commons and what happens in Merseyside West. In the real world, though, the two are diverging rather than converging. Mr Major's riposte to Mrs Gorman, that there should be a reasoned debate based on facts not scares, was admirable but naive. If it doesn't happen in the Commons, then why should it happen in Merseyside West?

Unnecessary and unwanted

Violence on TV is already being cut without ministerial help

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY wants to tackle violence. Good for her. There are innumerable ways our civilisation could reduce its aggression and destructiveness. The causes of violence are deep and complex — as psychologists have demonstrated — but some of its most fundamental impulses can be tackled: drink, poor parenting, family breakdown, poor communication skills, poverty and inequality. They all pose challenges to a Conservative minister: ranging from drink because of the donations the minister's party receives from the industry to inequality which would require the Government to return to the redistributive policies it abandoned 17 years ago. Yet the potential for progress on these fronts is huge: more conciliation and mediation services would reduce the aggression in marriage and divorce; more funds for the mushrooming agencies promoting parenting skills might really achieve a breakthrough on family life; tackling the threefold increase in children living in poverty since 1979 would have much wider benefits than just reducing violence. But Virginia Bottomley is not concerned with any of these issues. She ignored them as Minister for the Family and now, as Heritage Secretary, she can only concentrate on something much less fundamental: violence on television.

Her intervention yesterday in the debate on violence was cheap in two ways — first, in respect of it not costing the Government a penny, and second in

the way she sought to curvy political favour — including a leak of her "action plan" to the Daily Mail — a pretty empty gesture. The Heritage Secretary produced no new research on television violence, set out no new legislative proposals, and failed miserably to put into perspective television's contribution to violence. Instead, she invited television bosses to tighten their codes of practice governing gratuitous violence, called for clearer warnings to parents of the kind of material television programmes contain, and announced there would be a seminar next year on the issue.

Liberals have been guilty in the past of refusing to contemplate the link between television and violence but not anymore. Just because respectable researchers have failed to find a direct association should not pre-empt policymakers from applying commonsense and recognising that links may exist. The advertising industry does not invest its billions in television for altruistic purposes but because of the medium's influence and pull. Television's influence should not be exaggerated but it is important. The industry knows this and has cut the amount of violence on the screen in half since 1986 — down from 1.1 per cent to 0.6 per cent of programme time. Clearly, more could be done — and will be done. The BBC revised its codes this year and independent television is due to review its codes next year. Ministerial interventions are unnecessary and unwelcome.

The Whitehall gaffe syndrome

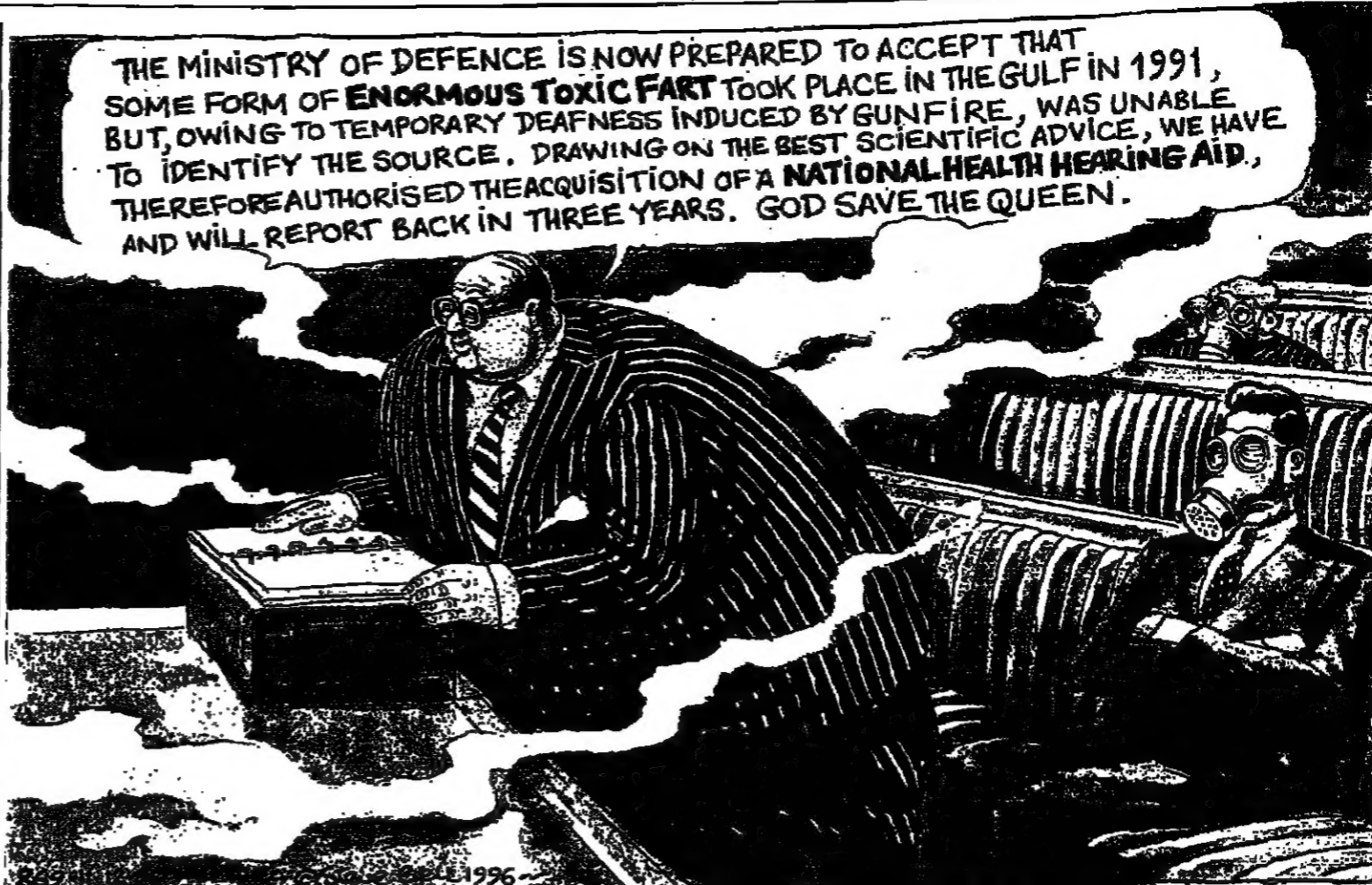
At last ministers admit what veterans have known for years

THE MINISTRY OF Defence now admits that there is such a thing as Gulf War illness — though not yet a Gulf War syndrome. Yesterday, Nicholas Soames, the armed forces minister, told Parliament that some Gulf veterans "are suffering from sickness which medical science has so far found it difficult to explain." That is what the veterans have been saying all along. They do not claim there was one single cause — that is why they describe it as a "syndrome". Attention in Britain has focused on the use of organophosphate (OP) pesticides; in the US on the proximity of some servicemen to chemical weapons (whether used by Iraq or destroyed by Allied action). There is also general concern about the "cocktail" of vaccinations and tablets which many soldiers consumed.

The research now announced by Mr Soames makes good epidemiological sense, but it should have been initiated

long ago. The MoD says that enough veterans with possible symptoms have now been located to provide a meaningful base line. But they have been there all along, only waiting to be identified. The new programme will only be completed nine years after the actual war. Meanwhile, some suspect procedures could be repeated in the field.

Mr Soames seems to be admitting that his ministry has made a mess of things while denying that there was ever any intention of a cover-up. Perhaps not deliberately, but the MoD's leisurely approach suggests at the very least a callous disregard. The misleading information supplied to ministers on the use of OPs — now the subject of a separate investigation — suggests something worse. The lobbying efforts of MPs and the veterans were scoffed at by the Government. Without them there would still be no proper (though long overdue) programme of research.



Letters to the Editor

EMU: fudge, fact and fiction

I AM amazed, although perhaps by now I should not be, at the Government's hypocrisy in accusing other nations of "fudging the figures" to ensure compliance with the convergence criteria for entry into EMU, when they themselves are fudging all sorts of figures to the people of this country (Not a single reason to join, December 9).

The scale of a nation's debt, the PSBR, is one of the main criteria for membership of EMU and which has to be no more than a certain percentage of GDP to qualify. In simple terms, this means that the country has not borrowed more than it can reasonably repay without causing a destabilising effect on the economy, in much the same way that I would have to satisfy my bank manager that I can repay a loan without getting into financial difficulties.

It has taken John Major only five years to double the PSBR from a figure that took his predecessors some 150 years to accumulate. He has borrowed not for investment but to give away politically-expedient tax cuts, which his Chancellor realises could now jeopardise EMU first-stage convergence qualification.

So, in order to fudge the figures, he creates the Private Finance Initiative, whereby various projects that should come out of government funds — such as roads and school-building — are now supposed to be funded by the PFI. This means that the contractors are obliged to raise the finance by borrowing from their banks, issuing bonds, or whatever, and the Government is obliged to repay them from normal tax revenues, over anything up to 30 years — thus not only hypothecating for years ahead the tax revenues of the people, but also saddling future administrations with the debt of their crass mismanagement.

They are doing exactly what they accuse Johnny Forester of doing. Michael Allan, Swanshead, South Devon, South Newton, Wiltshire SP2 0QW.

WHILE I largely agreed with Larry Elliott's case against EMU, he is being over-optimistic in suggesting that the adoption of a single European language (English, obviously) would solve the problems that a single currency will not.

The much-heralded advertisement by the European Movement states that "under no circumstances should the Government rule out participation in a single European currency, now or in the future." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a student of English, Linguistics, semantics or lexicography who would interpret this to mean anything but "Britain should enter the EMU at whatever terms are offered."

It is equally certain that the great and the good who signed this advertisement will deny it says any such thing. Chris Jones, 20 Antonine Gate, St Albans, Herts.

WHAT a load of nonsense Row Coward writes about the alleged trauma of getting used to using the euro (The euro in your pocket is devalued, December 9). Has she never spent a week or two abroad, using a different currency? It only takes a couple of days before you stop mentally converting prices back into sterling and start to recognise the real value of prices in francs, pesetas or whatever, and learn to judge a potential bargain.

Mixed views on mixed race

AS an academic researcher and a person who is happy to describe themselves as being of "mixed race", I found Bernie Grant's contention that society views mixed-race people as being black both simplistic and a little dangerous (Row over plan for census race labels, December 9). In my own experience, "You would never know you were half-Pakistani" is as common a response as being taken for being black or Asian, while suspicion, hostility, and even rejection from one or both of one's host communities has not been uncommon.

While I accept that, in many fields, mixed-race people will suffer from the same racial discrimination as other ethnic groups, this is no reason for rejecting the concept of mixed race as a racial category. With mixed-race friends and relatives, I have witnessed some of the consequences of being made to choose between two racial groups, two cultures and two identities — ranging from the person deciding to adopt a more "English" name, to full-scale emotional breakdown.

If a mixed-race person views themselves more strongly on one side or another than that is fine. But when someone feels themselves to be mixed race, such a view must be deemed to be

legitimate. A number of research projects that I have carried out found mixed race to be one of the most popular categories of ethnicity. (Dr Usman Awaiz Khan, Department of Politics and Public Policy, University of Luton, Park Square, Luton LU1 3JU.

WHEN I arrived in Fiji on contract I was appalled to find that the colonial government classified everybody into seven racial groups: 1. European (naturally first); 2. Fijian; 3. Indian (all persons from the sub-continent); 4. Rotuman (an island within the Fiji group); 5. Chinese; 6. Other Pacific Islanders and 7. PAKENIDS (Persons of mixed native and European descent). Every government document, driving licence, medical record, crime statistics etc contained this information.

On independence six months later, the new, indigenous administration continued this system exactly as before despite considerable inter-communal tension between Fijians and Indians. The new constitution required some voting to take place within each racial group as well as on a common roll.

As a doctor, I was fascinated by some of the differences in health statistics

shown between various communities — for example, Fijian mothers suffered a much higher incidence of post-partum haemorrhage than Indian ones; conversely, Indian mothers tended to have many more underweight babies. Clearly this information could only be gathered if a reliable system of racial classification was in place.

However, the introduction of such classification in this country is fraught with difficulty. It could only be useful if there were a limited number of well-defined groups, well understood by everyone. That is not the case. The political implications are too terrible to contemplate; and far outweigh any hypothetical benefits there might be in medical or sociological research.

John Bartley, Perrin Road, Birmingham B17.

IT is comforting to see that people are thinking harder about issues of "mixed race". But why do we rigidly re-affirm colour as the main way of distinguishing origin and race? Why do we not ask about white peoples' mixed heritage? Surely Jewish, Irish, European etc are also relevant?

Lara Charles, Branch Hill, London NW3.

ONE set of questions that is still not being asked is that of religious affiliation. Ethnicity is not simply a matter of place origin, first language or colour of skin. The religion of the respondent provides a clear marker of a person's culture and beliefs. In today's Britain, which is a multi-faith society, religion, as well as racial origin, is vitally important.

Incidentally, when an enlightened newspaper, are you going to stop the use of the sociologically and scientifically defined word race? Nadseem Hal, Lecturer in Sociology, Manchester Metropolitan University, Rosamond Street, Manchester M15 6LL.

WHY, at the end of the 20th century in a multi-cultural country like ours, is the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys offering people a selection of ethnic categories at all?

Why don't they ask people what they consider their ethnicity to be and just record the answer? This would surely preserve the credibility of OFCS but, more importantly, it would help to preserve the dignity of people questioned.

David Shannon, Woodland Mount, Hertford SG13.



Change your tune, guys

YOUR leader (December 9) on Guys and Dolls evades the real question. This is not the status of the musical — it needs no defence — but the decision to occupy our main subsidised stage with its revival for at least three and a half months.

This cannot be defended. It adds to the glut of commercial West End musicals, abandons the valued repertory system and deprives serious theatre-

lovers of large-scale innovative and classical drama. Even Richard Eyre, you report, had the grace to wonder if his tired idea was "shameful".

What is so obviously in need of revival are the true spirit, purpose, energy and enterprise of our National Theatre. Arthur Scholey, 1 Cranbourne Road, London N10 2BT.

Air support

AS Douglas Bader's most recent biographer, I knew the real man as well as anyone else alive (A hero is shot down — again, December 9). He was a great man in every way — not a flawed hero. He helped hundreds of disabled people to survive and recover — all with no publicity. He was infinitely courageous and caring.

You say Bader's Big Wing was only used "as back-up defence". In the later stages of the battle, it represented about one quarter of the total number of squadrons fighting the Luftwaffe. And it had remarkable results.

As for Bader's claims of numerical success, these were always exaggerated by everyone. On a major day, the total losses by the Germans were put at 180 but later revealed as 75. This was wartime propaganda. If it hadn't been for people like Bader, we would not have won the second world war. His memory is immortal. J.F. Turner, 302 The Metropole, Folkestone, Kent.

Crossing the line

THOSE of us who dish it out to politicians must expect to be shot at when we make mistakes. But there is a difference between a critic's opinion and malicious invention. Roy Greenslade (Media, December 9) complains that it was "odd to see the BBC's Political Editor Robin Oakley giving the official No 10 line on Wednesday [about Major not bowing to pressure from Clarke] when it emerged the next day that he had bowed", adding a gratuitous insult about my "willfulness to peddle the Downing Street line".

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Alain Pöher

A French vote for Europe

ALAIN Pöher, who has died aged 87, was a French political figure who, despite a long career in the Senate, appears more Fourth Republic than Fifth Republic. He was educated at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, had a law degree and a qualification as a civil mining engineer, and before the second world war worked in the finance ministry.

During the war he joined the "liberation word" resistance network and afterwards entered politics through the indirectly elected Senate. He was a Christian Democrat, the mayor of Abou-sur-Seine, Val d'Oise, from 1945-77, a nominated European deputy and president of the European Assembly 1966-69, headed the Senate Christian Democrat group and was president (speaker) of the Senate from 1968 to 1982.

(with a gap during 1967-8 when he was secretary of state for the armed forces). Pöher was a supporter of a directly elected European parliament with greater powers and a more thorough integration over a number of fields in the 1960s.

His closeness to Schuman — he headed his private office in 1946 — and to Henri Queuille as secretary of state for finance, as well as his commitment to the European ideal (dissenting from de Gaulle's European policy in the Christian Democrat Congress as early as 1950) made him almost the quintessence of the politics of Gaullist opposition.



He was a modest and reassuring politician, a pro-European, whose commitment to his ideals thrust him into the thick of the fight

the Senate (ironically one expectation was that he would repair relations with the Elysée) circumstances thrust him into the limelight in 1969. The general, to whom the Senate had become a substantial irritant, held a referendum on Senate and regional reform in April 1969.

Having been elected president of the Senate in 1968, it fell to Pöher to defend the institution from de Gaulle's attempts to downgrade it. The French electorate were treated to a vigorous and effective campaign from a hitherto unknown politician and when de Gaulle was defeated and resigned, in not the least of ironies, Pöher (as Senate

leader) automatically became acting President from April 28 to June 19. He sacked some of the more notorious placemen in the Elysée declared his intention to be a "President of reconciliation and unity" and saw his popularity soar. The Gaullist government, which remained in office, reacted by cutting him out of meetings which would normally have been chaired by the President.

Among the French public, apparently impressed by the new style of presidentialism, a momentum for a presidential bid had built up. Pöher launched on a campaign backed by centrists and some socialists. The Socialist Party was in disarray (having

begun the process of disbandment and rebirth) and many wanted to see the presidency returned to its disinterested role as regulator of the political game and away from its "imperial" pretensions (Pöher undoubtedly benefited from an element of stop-Mitterrand).

Pöher, however, needed very wide support in order to defeat the Gaullist candidate George Pompidou, and this, fatally, he failed to get with his centrist platform. His campaigning style, marked by vagueness and contradictory pulls (such as the need to disperse the initial enthusiasm although it probably would have needed more time than was available and a more sinuous politics than anybody could have achieved. He was opposed by the Communists, who ran their own candidate, and by many others on the left to whom Christian Democrat conservative was anathema.

However Pöher made a credible showing to take 23.4 per cent on the first ballot, but although he was the top opposition candidate his vote was insufficient and he polled only 42.4 per cent on the second ballot, at which the Communists called for abstention. Pöher declared that

there would be no Pöherist movement and expressed his desire to work amicably with the new President, and Pompidou did begin to draw the centrists back into the regime.

Pöher was devoted to the Senate but probably overstayed his term at the presidency of — partially because of disagreements about who could succeed — and at the end of his term the Senate was not as well run as it could have been. He was a modest and reassuring politician whose commitment to his ideals thrust him into the thick of the fight. His career is a silent sermon on the role of contingency in politics.

David Bell
Alain Emile Louis Marie Pöher, politician, born April 17, 1909; died December 9, 1996

Appreciation: Raphael Samuel

Genuine love for others

RAPHAEL Samuel (October 29, 1909 - December 10, 1996) opened my mind when I was a student in the 1960s. Until I went to Ruskin and met him, my education had come from correspondence courses, which I used to complete in a 14-bunk cabin after 20 hours' duty as a seaman on a liner. To move from that to two of you in a college room with a tutor was never my image of a tutor.

He would turn up with his hair all over the place, in a style of dressing that was all his own and that was brilliantly captured in the photograph of him which the Guardian published yesterday. He arrived with bags full of poems and bits of paper and references and he would pull one out when he wanted to make a point.

He made me do something I thought I'd never do. Not just write an essay — that was difficult enough for me — but use the experience of poetry to illustrate a point. Until then I had thought poetry was about them and not us.

John Prescott

and have a talk and a cup of coffee. He was always supportive like that.

For me, Raph was the Ruskin experience. I think he only intended to be there for one or two years, but he stayed for the rest of his life. Ruskin was phenomenal. It wasn't Oxford, but it was in Oxford. For people like me it was hard. Staying in a big fish in small pools were suddenly turned into small fish in big ones. Ruskin's founders said they wanted "to take the windbags out of the trade union movement and fill them with sand so they all think for stability not windbags for the revolution". Raph never saw it that way. He made revolution sound warm and not painful. He spoke for the heart and the soul of the labour movement, real people, real workers.

HE NEVER forgot you. When I was standing for the deputy leadership of the party in 1992 after Roy Hattersley resigned, I came under so much of attack from people who said I could never hold the job because I might stumble over my words and say the wrong things. Completely out of the blue, Raph wrote this wonderful little piece for the Guardian in which he was reminding me of some very strong memories of those Ruskin years and urging support for me. It moved me to tears.

He knew what was in the heart and he knew what was in the head. He wasn't taken in by an establishment that just judges by the mouth and the glamour. I felt really proud that he felt that way about me and that he was still there after 30 years.

I was devastated to hear of his death. He had such a genuine love for people. He had the loveliest warm smile, a warm knowing smile. It was truly comradely. Everything was lovely about that man.

John Prescott

Hugh L'Etang

Checking out the leaders

WITH THE trilogy *The Pathology of Leadership, Fit to Lead? and Ailing Leaders in Power*, Dr Hugh L'Etang, who has died of cancer aged 79, was the first writer to chronicle the mental and physical frailties of world rulers, including Winston Churchill and President Kennedy.

Hugh was interested in international affairs but, encouraged by his general practitioner father, the son followed in his footsteps. But like his boyhood favourite Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Hugh

revelations on Woodrow Wilson awakened his curiosity in the health problems of those who lead us. At the second he met research epidemiologist Dr Cecily Tinker, who he married in 1951.

During the next 20 years he worked mainly as an occupational physician. In 1954 he studied occupational medicine at Harvard and made many lifelong friends, including White House physician Dr Larry Mohr. Then, in 1969, Hugh became assistant editor of the GPs' journal, *The Practitioner*. And that year his acclaimed first book, *The Pathology of Leadership*, was published.

The last time I lunched with him, a few months ago, he reflected he had been past 50 when he realised his vocation. He made up for lost time. He was a talented all-round journalist, and in 1973 he became a principled and popular editor of *The Practitioner*. I was a young sub-editor then and he was a kind, amusing and inspiring mentor.

In 1980 *Fit to Lead?* was published. After his retirement he edited *Travel Medicine International*, was consultant editor to the *Physician and Free-lance*. In 1986, although suffering from prostate cancer, he published his final book *Ailing Leaders in Power* (1984-94).

Hugh continued to write and lecture at home and in the United States. Bright and incisive until the end, I never once heard him complain about his illness. His wife Cecily, to whom he was devoted, died suddenly in April and Hugh never recovered from this blow. He leaves behind a cherished son and daughter and a wide, eclectic circle of friends whose lives were enriched by his kindness and charm.

Corinne Short
Hugh Joseph Charles James L'Etang, medical writer, born November 23, 1917; died November 25, 1996



L'Etang... GP and writer

was destined to make his name as a writer rather than doctor. And fittingly he was a lifelong Sherlock Holmes Society member.

Educated at Haileybury he read medicine at St John's College, Oxford, and London's St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College, graduating in 1942. As a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps he took part in the Normandy invasion and the Rhine crossing, and was twice mentioned in despatches.

At the end of the war he went into general practice with his father in Bethnal Green. Then in 1947 he attended two lectures at the altered course of his life. At the first Dr Harley Williams's



A touch of glamour and glitter at a Scottish seaside show... May Moxon with one of her troupes of dancers

May Moxon

A long line of chorus lines

MAY MOXON, who has died aged 95, was synonymous with the heyday of Scottish variety theatre. For half a century her dance troupes were an essential feature of just about every production on the flourishing Scottish circuit.

No summer show was complete without the May Moxon Young Ladies, or some variation upon that name. Colloquially, they were more often referred to in the business as "Moxon's Oxen", though this did justice neither to their glamorous nor feminine.

May Moxon was born into a Glasgow show business family and was originally one of a family act, the Four MacLeans. Her real name was Euphemia MacDonald but she soon borrowed her stage name

from an uncle, Harold Moxon, who was an actor. She began her stage career as a dancer but had to give up after suffering severe leg injuries in a car accident at the age of 27. Doctors wanted to amputate her leg but she successfully resisted and, for most purposes other than dancing, made a recovery which kept her mobile throughout her life.

In the 1930s she turned to teaching and hiring out chorus line-ups. Soon there were up to 150 Moxon Maids gracing the numerous variety stages which offered work in this golden age of the Scottish seaside show. Her girls also worked in resorts like Blackpool and the Isle of Man which were popular with Scottish holidaymakers.

In his funeral oration the comedian Jimmy Logan

noted that May Moxon never made much money. The dancers were each paid between £2 and £3 for dancing twice-nightly, six nights a week, when Equity took a stand in order to increase the rate to £4 a week the skinflint owners resisted bitterly and predicted financial disaster.

Moxon and an assistant toiled late into the night to make the glittering costumes worn by the girls, for whom it was a life of relative glamour compared to alternative occupations of the era. Recruitment was largely through dancing schools. A few made it to Paris or Las Vegas but most remained Moxon girls throughout their brief careers.

In the 1970s the variety stage finally lost the unequal battle with television. May Moxon retired,

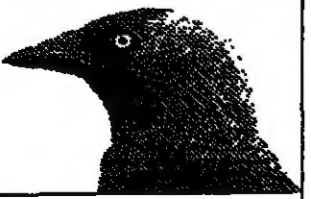
but she maintained a close interest in the business, particularly through the Variety Artists Benevolent Fund, and was an honoured guest at those Scottish theatres which remained thereafter.

Scottish show business historian Gordon Irving said: "She was a busy, ever-smiling lady, a personality with a boundless recall of the heyday of Scottish variety and seaside shows. She was knowledgeable to the end about the light entertainment world of which she was so much a part for most of this century."

May Moxon is survived by her son, Tom.

Brian Wilson
Euphemia MacDonald (May Moxon), dance producer, born October 9, 1902; died November 25, 1996

Jackdaw



HoHoHo factor

THERE are 2 billion children in the world. But since Santa doesn't handle the Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist children, that reduces the workload to 15 per cent or 378 million. At an average rate of 3.5 children per household, that's 91.8 million homes.

Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work through, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 82.6 visits per second for each Christian household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park,

hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left and move on. Assuming for the purposes of calculation that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth, we are talking about 78 miles per household, a total trip of 78.5 million miles. This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. The fastest man-made vehicle on earth, the *Ulysses* space probe, moves at 97.4 miles per second — a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour.

Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized Lego set (2 pounds), the sleigh is carrying 321,500 tons, not counting Santa, invariably described as overweight. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that "flying reindeer" could pull 10 times the normal amount, we cannot do the job with eight, or even nine; we need 214,500. This in-

creases the payload to 353,430 tons — four times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth; 353,000 tons travelling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance — this will heat the reindeer up like spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy. Per second. Each. They will burst into flame almost instantaneously, and create deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire team will be vaporised within 4.26 thousandths of a second.

Santa, the final frontier calculations by *Wing Monoceros of Columbia University's Civil Engineering Dept.*, courtesy *sudanese@msn.edu*.

Big girls blowsy

APPRODITE by our standards is fat. If you take another look at the Venus de

Milo, you have to be impressed by her girth. She's a chunk — immense round hips, great tits, this is a big girl! Her beauty lies in the proportions of her body, not in its slenderness. She's not chic like Nefertiti, she doesn't immediately arouse you with some mysterious electric spark — like what flies from the corners of Claudin's mouth, or from the jut of a bony hip, or from the racy elongated curves of these strange and exciting poses. Venus is both vigorous and fat, with no skinny chest, but a vast expanse of neck and shoulders and breast.

Richard Klein's *Hot Fat*, quoted in *Marie-Claire*.

Clash reunion

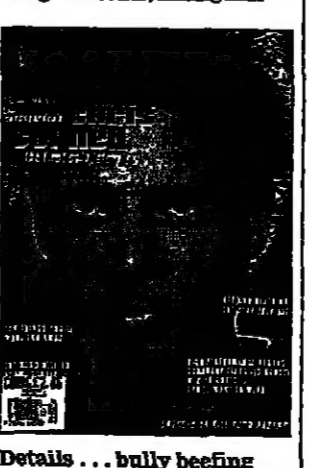
JIMMIE hit his growth spurt early and he was mean. He was a foot taller than I was and had wiry, junior-grade prison muscles. Jimmy could do some damage. And because he could, he did not have to. Instead he toyed with me, swatted at me, took me into the woods and tore my Boy Scout medals off at knife-

point. The worst thing wasn't the beating. The worst thing was waiting for it.

Jimmy would hang out by his house and when I'd pass nearby he'd strike. "Hey," he'd say, "you're on my property." Then he'd come out and face me down. I'd try not to do anything too provoking — I had some pride — but I'd also try not to give him an excuse to really beat me. Jimmy made the torment last. He'd lean in and shout at me, and I'd try to apologise as little as possible. Eventually a group would gather around and wait for me to get pummed.

One day it came to a head. I was walking home with my six-year-old brother when I saw a crowd at the end of my street. When they saw me they began to make that there-going-to-be-a-fight sound which every kid who has ever gotten stomped remembers distinctly. Jimmy appeared. "You called me a pussy," he said, pushing me back. My brother looked at me hopefully, as if to say: *Go ahead, kick his ass so that I can be proud of you.* "No, I didn't, Jimmy," I gulped, thinking *This time he's*

gone too far. I'll show him. I pulled back my fist, thinking about David and Goliath and about every story my mom ever told me where a good, peaceful man gets shoved around long enough and then everything was kind of blurry and I was covered in my own blood. I had tree bark in my mouth because Jimmy had been slamming my face into a tree. My brother leaped on his head like a midwest wrestler, hitting him



Details... bully beefing

Letter: Don Keynon

David Hout writes: Many followers of Worcestershire cricket will remember Don Keynon (obituary November 14) above all for leading the county to their first championship in 1994. The New Road ground was very informal in those days; schoolboys could watch the game without troubling the gatekeepers, by leaning over the wall on the river Severn side of the ground. We went through the turnstiles on August 25, however, to see the county complete an innings victory over neighbours Gloucestershire. Afterwards a large crowd gathered in front of the pavilion to await the result of the match at Southampton between Hampshire and the other championship contenders, Warwickshire. Soon after the cathedral clock had

struck five, the news came through: Warwickshire had lost, and Worcestershire were therefore county champions for the first time, in the 99th year of their history. Cycling home that evening, we stopped off at the Red Hart at those days; schoolboys could watch the game without troubling the gatekeepers, by leaning over the wall on the river Severn side of the ground. We went through the turnstiles on August 25, however, to see the county complete an innings victory over neighbours Gloucestershire. Afterwards a large crowd gathered in front of the pavilion to await the result of the match at Southampton between Hampshire and the other championship contenders, Warwickshire. Soon after the cathedral clock had

Death Notices

GORVILLE, on 29 December Elin Josephine (Nell) nee Reilly, Dear wife for 57 years of Dr Cornelius J. (Cory) Griffin, A priest of the Diocese of Down and Connor, died peacefully at home, 100 St Anne's Rd, Drogheda, on Thursday 29th December 1996, aged 87 years. Burial in St Anne's at 6.30pm, on Friday 30th December, followed by Requiem Mass with Eulogy at 10.30am, on Saturday 31st December, in St Anne's. A year later her ashes will be interred in the Garden of the Holy Child, Drogheda. Donations to St Anne's, Drogheda, or to the Diocese of Down and Connor, Drogheda, would be appreciated. Tel: 0171 749 4257

SAUNDERS Dorothy died at home on December 10, 1996. A memorial service in memory of Dorothy will be held at 11.30am on Monday, December 16, 1996, at the Church of St. John the Baptist, 11, St. John's Road, Drogheda. Donations to the Diocese of Down and Connor, Drogheda, would be appreciated. Tel: 0171 749 4257

WESTON, Miss Daisy George, aged 86, died on December 10, 1996, at St. James's Hospital, Drogheda. Burial in Drogheda on December 13, 1996, at 1.30pm. No flowers. Donations to St. James's Hospital, Drogheda, would be appreciated. Tel: 0171 749 4257

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Finance Guardian

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Alliance members say yes

Building society wins backing to convert to bank

Richard Miles

ALLIANCE & Leicester members gave their overwhelming backing to the building society's conversion plans yesterday, ensuring they will each receive free shares worth about £1,000 next year.

Some 70 per cent of the building society's savers took part in the poll, with 96 per cent voting in favour of its conversion to a bank. Of the borrowers who voted, 97 per cent said yes to the proposals. Yesterday's mandate allows Alliance & Leicester to proceed with its listing on the stock market, scheduled for between April and June, depending on the timing of the general election. On flotation, 250 free shares will be distributed to each of the 2.4 million qualifying members.

attended by almost 500 members, most of whom were long-term savers disgruntled at the society's decision to make a flat-rate payment to all qualifying investors.

With the exception of Abbey National, other converting building societies have linked the value of the payout to the size of the saver's account balance and the customer's loyalty record.

Many Alliance & Leicester members feel the flat-rate payment unfairly favours "carpetbaggers" — speculators who open accounts in the hope of a windfall — because they will receive the same number of shares as savers who have been with the society for most of their lives.

Jean Brogan, a saver with Alliance & Leicester for 60 years, spoke for many at the



meeting when she told the board that her loyalty and trust had been ill-served by the society's policy of paying about £1,000 to each and every qualifying member.

Ms Brogan, a 69-year-old pensioner from Banstead,

Surrey, said: "I feel neglected for my trust in the Alliance. It is the long-term investor who has enabled the society to grow to this size." She is now considering withdrawing the bulk of her £50,000 savings in protest at the level payout.

Patrick Mountain, head of the Alliance & Leicester investors' action group, said he had received 1,500 letters from disenchanted long-term investors. Many correspondents accused the board of "moral corruption or worse", said Mr Mountain.

Group chief executive, Peter White, rejected the criticism, saying that a flat-rate payout was the best way to reflect the "mutual principle" of one member, one vote. "Around 70 per cent of our members have less than £2,000 in their accounts and 65 per cent less than £5,000," he said.

The board also came under

fire for its refusal to hand out shares to disabled savers who were not the first named on the account. One member of the audience claimed Alliance & Leicester could, under the law, make multiple allocations of shares "in particular circumstances".

Mr White, however, dismissed the suggestion, saying Alliance & Leicester was bound by the terms of the Building Societies Act, which stipulated that shares could be distributed only to the first named. "It was impossible to devise a share scheme that would please everybody," he said.

The only remaining obstacle to flotation is new building societies legislation to be published later this month. This will remove converting societies' five year protection from predators if they seek to acquire a financial institution.

Notebook

Where loyalty gets punished



Edited by Alex Brummer

IT IS perhaps too much to hope that building society members soon will rise up in revolt against the loss of mutualism and vote against the cash and share bribes on offer. Nevertheless, dissenting voices drowned out elsewhere in the rush to collect the cash have properly been heard in the case of the Alliance & Leicester.

The society's path from mutualism to a conversion scheduled for between April and June next year has been bungled almost from the start. As recently as a year ago, the Alliance & Leicester was among those societies defending the idea of mutualism, to the point that it was willing to sponsor papers and seminars spelling out the virtues. The moment it realised that the larger part of its sector was heading for the exit and its status, the society joined the rush even though there is still no convincing case that flotation will allow it to expand into areas from which it is currently excluded. In fact, the Alliance & Leicester already had substantial banking operations, through Giro, which gave it a flexibility unavailable to others.

As for the specifics of the conversion, the flat earth approach, which applies to everyone except directors and senior executives, may look fair but has been highly damaging in particular, those members with larger deposits who remained loyal have, in effect, been punished for not taking their cash and moving to other mutuals, offshore or elsewhere for a higher return.

Other societies, including the far larger and more complicated Halifax, have managed to relate deposits to the cash/share allocation. Mutuals may mean one person, one vote, but as the Alliance & Leicester is abandoning that principle anyway, it ought to recognise that the depositor with £50,000 has contributed more to the society and deserves a better return than one with £1,000 or less.

Moreover, the society has manoeuvred itself into an untenable position on disabled members by its insistence that only the first-named holder of an account (usually a carer) can receive the payout, thus excluding perhaps that same carer from another payout on their own account. Other societies, including the Halifax, have managed to deal with this problem, which seems to have been beyond the competence of the A&L management. The case for a legal challenge on this issue is a strong one which should be pressed, even if it holds up the whole process.

There is, of course, one group at the Alliance & Leicester which will not be subject to its penchant for

equal treatment of all. As the Guardian reported last month, top executives stand to benefit from substantial share options within 42 days of the flotation, with chief executive Peter White entitled to options worth £500,000. No doubt he deserves it, as he steers a £2.5 billion financial group away from the protections offered by the Building Societies Act towards the open season of the stock market.

But it is not quite open season. The Alliance & Leicester is fighting hard to retain the five-year rule which protects it from a hostile takeover. If Mr White really wants the society to join the grown-ups, with all the financial accretions which come with being masters of a pie, then it must also accept the discipline of the marketplace. This means no special protection from the likes of BAT, the Prudential and others seeking to position themselves more strongly in financial services.

Northern buddy

NORTHERN Electric is getting quite good at blowing the spot. It has done it twice and perhaps it will be for that that it goes down in history — certainly it has little else to recommend it to posterity.

When the utility was fighting off the first bid in the electricity industry it built its defence against a rampaging Trafalgar House by offering shareholders £60 million of loyalty sweeteners. The largesse was so gigantic that it forced the normally sedate electricity watchdog, Stephen Mitchell, into action. At no little embarrassment to himself, he ripped up a newly-completed set of price controls for the industry and set about imposing tougher ones. If Northern could afford sweeteners on this scale, the industry as a whole clearly had swindled pools of cash which had been hidden from him.

Northern escaped Trafalgar's clutches but has had the Americans, in the form of CE Energy, snapping at its heels. And yet, chairman David Morris and his team of Northern directors have done it again. The board has acknowledged that it could afford to pay Labour's planned windfall tax out of the company's own resources.

Let it sink in. Most utilities which care to comment on the windfall tax have been peddling tales of catastrophe and woe, threatening legal action, and even, if it claimed, trying to enlist White House officials to the cause of getting the tax plan scrapped.

Now the utility with the biggest debt burden — Northern has had to take on unusually high gearing levels to defend itself from takeover — has made it clear that it can still put a hand in its own pocket and stomp up the cash.

In doing so, Northern directors will have seen their already small circle of friends in the electricity industry shrink further. If it is any consolation, they have found a new buddy in Gordon Brown.

Compass sets £3.75 as minimum wage limit

Len King

COMPASS Group, the world's largest contract catering group, warned yesterday that it would be unhappy if the minimum wage proposed by Labour came in at above £3.75 an hour.

Compass, many of whose 30,000 British employees are part-time, said the minimum wage would not have any impact on the company if it was set at £2.75 or under. Francis Mackay, chief executive, said anything above that figure would pose problems. "At over £3.75, it would become a pricing, tariff and productivity issue."

His comments came as Compass revealed a 66 per cent jump in full-year pre-tax profits, to £114.3 million. The company continues to see benefits from its clutch of branded offerings. The latest is Ritazza, a coffee bar offering flavoured beverages, including Christmas pudding-flavoured coffee. Compass shares closed up 8 1/2p, at 262p, on the figures.



Francis Mackay, left, and finance director Roger Matthews drink to rise in profits, at Ritazza coffee bar, Victoria station

Hinchliffe loses argument over Facia liquidator

Dan Atkinson

STEPHEN Hinchliffe stalled yesterday to persuade creditors of his crashed Facia retail group to appoint the liquidator of his choice.

Instead, the accountancy firm BDO Stoy Hayward was given the job of liquidating the company, which is estimated to have debts of about £20 million.

Mr Hinchliffe did not attend the creditors' meeting in Leeds, at which it emerged there is money available to pay only about 3.75p in the pound.

It is understood the former Facia chief had decided on legal advice not to attend. Creditors, led by Sears, unanimously chose BDO Stoy Hayward against Mr Hinchliffe's choice of a local firm, Geoffrey Martin & Co.

Facia — which had included high-street names such as Sock Shop, Red or Dead and Contessa — collapsed in the summer. Shareholders will also receive an upbeat assessment of the value of the company's holding in Sovereign, the North Sea gas business, and in the telecoms company Ionica.

CE Electric dismissed the Northern defence as "not jam tomorrow but in the next century". The proposals lagged behind initiatives announced by rivals.

Yorkshire Electricity interim profits fell to £80.8 million on £98.3 million turnover but the dividend went up 33 per cent to 15.5p a share.

BCCI fraud victims paid £1 bn

Dan Atkinson

VICTIMS of the biggest fraud in history — the £20 billion (£12.5 billion) collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International — saw the end of a five-year wait yesterday as they received the first payments since the fraud-riddled bank crashed into liquidation in summer 1991.

Nearly £1 billion was paid out to 30,000 creditors around the world, including a thousand in the UK, in a share-out equivalent to 24.5p in the pound — as predicted in yesterday's Guardian. A

second payment, worth not less than another 10p in the pound, is due within 16 months and a third, worth not less than 6p, is expected eventually.

But this third payout — and any subsequent compensation — will rely upon the success of large-scale legal actions planned by liquidators Deloitte & Touche against, *inter alia*, the Bank of England and BCCI's former auditors, accountants Ernst & Young and Price Waterhouse. Each of these writs is for about £1 billion.

Ironically, the size of yesterday's payout was due in part to international criminal-

ity: about \$1 billion of BCCI losses were never pressed with the liquidators, almost certainly because the creditors were persons of ill repute. BCCI was linked to money laundering.

Beneficiaries of the first disbursements included six British local authorities, one of which — the Western Isles council — notoriously paid more than £28 million on deposit with BCCI in the hope of better returns. Yesterday's move will mean \$6 million for the islands.

BCCI — based in Luxembourg and the Cayman Islands, effectively run from the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, wrote off \$2.2 billion of his own

market HQ in the City — was shut in July 1991 as a result of international regulatory action led by the Bank of England. Liquidators soon discovered BCCI had no capital and contained "black holes" — including bogus accounts and missing funds — totalling nearly \$13 billion.

Aside from the \$1 billion-odd "waived" by international crime, yesterday's £200 million "distribution" was made possible by Deloitte having recovered about half the \$10 billion-plus missing from BCCI five years ago. The bank's chief shareholder, the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, wrote off \$2.2 billion of his own

claims against the bank and put \$1.8 billion into a compensation fund. In addition to realisations of the bank's few assets, a further \$400 million has been obtained through legal action, and the United States authorities have agreed to release half of the \$1 billion of BCCI assets they seized after the crash.

There has been criticism of liquidators' costs — £13 million as of mid-January this year — but Deloitte has argued that the expected 40 per cent final payments to creditors are near-miraculous given the huge negative worth of BCCI at the time of the shutdown.

Costain sells coal and land stakes

Roger Cowe

THE fire sale of assets at the battered construction group Costain continued yesterday when the company announced that it had found buyers for its US coal business and its share in the Spitfields development in London.

Following the sales, chairman Sir Christopher Benson and chief executive Alan Lovell will stand down in the new year. But the group warned that its troubles continued, with much greater losses than had been anticipated over the past few months.

As a result, net assets had shrunk to less than half of its 24-month-old, requiring an extraordinary general meeting under the terms of the Companies Act.

The sale will be held on January 6 and the directors warned yesterday that disposals are essential to meet bank lending limits. They also said that bank facil-

ities should be sufficient to cover its needs, but the board has made no allowance for any liability to Eurotunnel by the Channel Tunnel consortium TMI, of which Costain was part.

Remaining US coal operations will be sold to an American mining company, Renco, for about £21 million, against the £50 million expected from an abortive deal with Lonrho last summer.

Since then, mining operations have been hit by poor geological conditions, which will result in losses for the year being £11 million worse than previously expected.

The group has also been hit by problems in its Middle East construction business. East construction, which has suffered losses £4 million higher than expected.

Costain's share in the Spitfields site is to be sold for £28 million to a Malaysian company, Metacorp, which is 23 per cent-owned by Intrix, one of Costain's biggest shareholders since the financial rescue organised in July.

Northern defies Labour threat to evade predator

Chris Barrie

LABOUR'S plans for a windfall tax on the privatised utilities were given a boost last night when Northern Electric broke ranks by promising hefty increases in dividends to shareholders even if such a levy were imposed.

In a last-ditch attempt to escape the clutches of a £782 million hostile bid from US predator CE Electric, the Newcastle-based electricity company promised higher dividends despite a threatened windfall tax of as much as 281 million.

The promise, made in Northern's third formal defence document, includes a 17 per cent hike in the dividend to 50p a share in the year to March 1998. Dividends will then grow 7 per cent a year.

Northern said that it opposed a windfall tax but Labour immediately seized on the dividend pledge as evidence that the utilities were

close to accepting that a tax was inevitable. One source close to shadow chancellor Gordon Brown said that utilities are lobbying against the tax. But, in private, most accept it will be introduced. "They can evi-

Utilities are lobbying against tax. But in private most accept it will be introduced

dently afford it while maintaining strong dividend flows to shareholders." Labour indicated that Northern would know the scale of the levy once the party announced the methodology behind the tax. There would be no appeal process.

Northern is also promising to merge its electricity and gas supply business with another company, thought to be

Bank union fears 800 jobs will go in new round of cuts

Pauline Springett

ANOTHER 800 jobs could be axed from the embattled banking and insurance sectors, finance union Bifu warned yesterday.

The union, which estimates that 100,000 jobs have been lost from banking since 1990 and warns that a further 100,000 could go from insurance, identified the latest jobs at risk after separate announcements by insurer Guardian and Barclays Bank.

Guardian said it was axing 350 jobs and closing 12 offices in its UK general insurance division. It said the acquisition of Legal & General's commercial insurance operation earlier this year had resulted in duplication and costs needed to be cut.

Although a spokesman said the company was hoping the job losses would be accommo-

dated through voluntary redundancies and early retirement, compulsory redundancies could not be ruled out.

Bifu attacked the proposal, scheduled for completion by next summer, as arbitrary. "These appear to be intended to please analysts and the stock market. It's just change for change's sake — it will not help customer service," said a spokesman.

The union was also incensed by news that US bank Morgan Stanley is acquiring the global securities business of Barclays. No price was disclosed for the deal, although City sources estimated its value at around £50 million. It will involve the transfer of some £250 million in assets administered by Barclays.

Bifu said Morgan Stanley had guaranteed jobs for only 67 of Barclays' staff, putting around 400 in jeopardy.

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Canada 2.19	Hong Kong 12.49	New Zealand 2.2750	Sweden 11.17
Cyprus 0.7825	India 98.12	Norway 10.47	Switzerland 2.12
Denmark 1.5175	Indonesia 13.875	Portugal 25.75	Turkey 165.710
Finland 7.83	Israel 5.40	Saudi Arabia 1.17	USA 1.5175

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Alders reflects retail boom

Roger Cowe

DEPARTMENT store chain Alders yesterday produced evidence to back claims of a high street boom, reporting its best sales picture since 1988 and predicting that buoyant conditions would continue for two years.

Chief executive Harvey Lipsith acknowledged that interest rate rises would dampen consumer enthusiasm. But he was confident that the recovery was strong enough to withstand some increase, and should not be knocked by a Labour victory in the general election.

"If people feel that rates are on the rise then even though they may still be dramatically below where they were three or four years ago, there is an element of nervousness that creeps into sentiment and that must flow through to the retail sector in particular," said Mr Lipsith. "And while the election is bound to create uncertainty I don't think the outcome is critical to demand in the short term. So I am fairly confident of a strong retail market for up to two years."

Alders, whose sales are more heavily weighted towards furniture and other heavy household goods, suffered during the recession. But the company saw sales surge during the summer and said the strong sales picture was continuing.

Excluding new stores and disposals, sales in the six months to September were more than 17 per cent ahead of last year. The figures were even more dramatic in Alders' 10-strong At Home stores, which sell household furnishings on out-of-town retail estates. In these shops, sales over the summer months were a third higher than in the previous year.

Mr Lipsith said that this increase was flattered by poor sales during last year's hot summer, but shoppers had continued to spend freely during the autumn. In the first nine weeks of the current financial year, comparable sales were 14 per cent higher than last year. The group's total sales last year were £756 million.

Vested interests block WTO plan



Cheers and tears... As representatives of western states toast each other, little has emerged from the Singapore conference to help a child worker in India

Poorest traders kept on outside

Larry Elliott in Singapore

THE world's poorest countries look set to leave the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference empty-handed after the collapse of a plan to give them duty-free access to the rich markets of the West.

Some of the stiffest opposition to the blueprint, put forward by WTO director Renato Ruggiero, came from a handful of Asian textile exporters who feared it would boost Bangladeshi producers at their expense.

They joined forces with many western nations — although not Britain — in forcing Mr Ruggiero to water down his idea to a general commitment to address marginalisation.

The WTO is now hoping that Britain may set an example to other western nations by coming up with its own unilateral deal in the new year, in an attempt to help 29 countries pinpointed by the WTO. Of these, 37 are in sub-

Saharan Africa and only two — Bangladesh and Haiti — are significant clothing and footwear exporters.

Under pressure from poorer nations and the aid agencies, the WTO has been eager to show that free trade brings benefits to all its 127 members and not just the developed economies of Europe, North America and East Asia.

A report by Christian Aid this week reflected concern that the poorest countries are being marginalised when it said 48 developing countries are worse off as a result of the last round of trade liberalisation.

It strongly endorsed the idea, floated by Mr Ruggiero at last summer's Group of Seven summit in Lyon, that the least developed countries should face zero tariffs in an attempt to build up their export industries.

Despite the fact that Christian Aid's list of countries accounts for only 0.3 per cent of world exports, the proposal has been opposed by Canada, the US, Spain, Italy, France and Portugal.



There had been a chance, going into the Singapore talks, that the West might agree to the Ruggiero plan as a way of securing agreement from developing countries on changes to investment rules and competition policy.

The refusal of the big textile exporters — India, Hong Kong, Pakistan and Indonesia — to back the idea has forced Mr Ruggiero to admit defeat.

WTO sensitivity to the charge that trade liberalisation has brought benefits only to the richer countries was reflected yesterday when the organisation's secretariat released a paper arguing that

lower-income countries would benefit from free trade.

Chief economist Richard Blackhurst said: "African nations stood to reap little benefit from the Uruguay Round of talks because they had taken only small steps towards trade liberalisation. Opening up their economies would mean richer rewards.

While admitting that the bulk of the gains would go to richer nations, he said smaller nations would benefit from WTO rules because they would no longer be subject to unilateral action by powerful countries.

The WTO believes that

phasing out the multi-fibre arrangement — the protectionist measure that keeps low-cost imports out of western markets — will eventually bring huge benefits to developing countries.

It admits that the deal has been back-end loaded so that the lucrative markets of Europe and North America will not be significantly open until 2005. As a result, developing countries have taken a tough line on issues such as bringing labour standards under the aegis of the WTO, which they fear could lead to greater protectionism against their products.

News in brief

Waldegrave pensions boast angers MPs

THE Treasury Chief Secretary, William Waldegrave, came under fire last night as he insisted future generations of taxpayers would thank the Tories for their drive to push state-funded pensions out to the private sector. As MPs on the Treasury select committee questioned him about Government pension plans in the Budget, he argued that reducing pension liabilities was crucial to cutting overall spending and had been tackled more successfully in the UK than in most other countries. It would mean not having to increase taxation on future generations to fund pension payments. "It was one of the most important financial changes of all from the 1980s and people will look back on it with great admiration."

Labour committee member Diane Abbott said only the "Tories' friends" in the private pensions industry would thank the Government and accused Mr Waldegrave of lacking interest in the millions — including teachers and postal workers — who lost money by transferring from state to private pensions. — Sarah Ryle and Charlotte Denny

Watchdogs learn to share

FIRST steps towards bringing the gas and electricity regulators under one roof appear to have been taken yesterday with the announcement that a leading official is to work for both watchdogs. Eileen Marshall, who had been poached from the Office of Electricity Regulation to work for Ofgas, is to return to Offer for one day a week while continuing at Ofgas for the rest of the time. The right-wing economist was widely seen as the leading light behind the review of charges for British Gas's TransCo pipeline business, now the subject of a Monopolies Commission inquiry. She is an enthusiastic champion of competition and the free market.

Labour has hinted that it would bring Ofgas and Offer together particularly after the gas and electricity markets open to full competition in 1998. Former energy minister Tim Eggar suggested recently that he would back such a move. — Simon Fretwell

Virgin Direct censured

VIRGIN Direct, the financial services arm of Richard Branson's business empire, was yesterday rapped over the knuckles for claiming in an advertisement that the insurance industry had failed "to protect families in ways to suit them best".

The Advertising Standards Authority upheld a complaint from a trade body for independent financial advisers that Virgin's advertisement was "unfair and likely to mislead". Virgin said earlier complaints had been dismissed. — Richard Miles

Chemical compound created

GERMAN chemicals group Hoechst said it would spin off its specialty chemicals business to Clariant of Switzerland, creating a company with annual sales of about DM9 billion (£3.5 billion). Hoechst said the move, which will leave it with a "significant minority stake" in the enlarged Clariant, is designed to cut costs, while Clariant, spun off by Sandoz last year, would gain a competitive advantage.

Clariant shares rose as much as 8.5 per cent on the unexpected news, while Hoechst shares gained 3.2 per cent in Germany. "Yet another giant seems to be in the making," said Patrick Carlier of Swiss Volksbank. "It's all about size, and is part of the trend to become bigger and at the same time focused." — Bloomberg

Ex-minister joins Unigate

JOHN MacGregor, former Conservative education and transport secretary, and MP for Norfolk South, yesterday joined Unigate, the dairy and distribution firm, as a non-executive director. Mr MacGregor, who was minister of agriculture, fisheries and foods between 1987 and 1989, is also a director of Associated British Foods and Slough Estates. — Reuters

Supermarkets stunt greenery

SUPERMARKETS are holding back the growth of green shopping because they do not provide clear product information, according to the National Consumer Council. Research by the NCC found that one in three consumers is committed to buying products which do less damage to the environment, while one in five regularly buys green products. But the NCC says shoppers are hampered by a lack of clear information. — Roger Cowe

From bomb sites to prime sites

After the devastation of the early 1990s commercial property has become fashionable again, writes Ian King

SUDDENLY commercial property that most bombed-out markets in the early 1990s — is sexy again, and John Ritblat, the godfather of the sector, is sitting pretty.

Mr Ritblat is chairman of British Land, Britain's second biggest property company, which yesterday unveiled a highly impressive 81 per cent increase in half year pre-tax profits to £34.3 million.

More significantly, he is just about the only one of that great generation of property entrepreneurs which bestrode the 1970s and 1980s to have ridden out successive boom-bust cycles endured by the sector. He now finds himself the role model for a thriving new generation of property men.

The best known of this new breed are Nick Lesau and Nigel Wray, the pair who ear-

lier this year floated the revitalised Trocadero development, and Elliott Bernard, the highly respected chairman of Chelsfield Group and the man behind some of London's most ambitious property redevelopments in recent years.

The commercial property sector has swung back into fashion on the strength of solid if unspectacular economic growth, along with predictable and steady — certainly compared with those of the last two decades — interest rates.

As demand has picked up for good quality offices, things have shifted back in favour of commercial landlords, and rents have picked up at the top end of the market.

That has also been true for industrial premises, while the unrelenting popularity of out-of-town shopping centres has

ensured that retail rents have also flourished.

The question now is what 1997 will hold for the commercial property market, and, as the sector's great survivor, Mr Ritblat is better placed to comment than most.

According to him, the sector as a whole though it is dangerous to generalise — is poised to improve further over the next year, as the economy continues gradually to strengthen. In particular, Mr Ritblat cited the office market as being particularly promising with the City and West End of London continuing to lead the way and the rest of Britain lagging behind.

"The potential is there for quite a big jump, though I think we'll actually see more modest increases. But in the provinces, the initial promise of the recovery has not been borne out, and there have been no increases in rents yet. However, you are beginning to see a glimmer of improvement there now."

In the retail sector — where British Land last month formed a £175 million joint venture with Tesco to run the

pair's retail property holdings — Mr Ritblat expects the recent booming demand for out-of-town sites to continue, boosted by government restrictions on building.

"Retail has almost been like the office market was at the end of the 1980s. The feelgood factor and a feeling that the rationalisation of the 1990s has come to an end have helped, and I think there's a reasonable consensus that even an interest rate rise of between 1-1/2 per cent won't be terminal."

The boom might spell trouble for high street rents, but this would not be nationwide phenomena, with some high streets redefining themselves as "boutique" shopping areas.

As for British Land, the City had to see humble yesterday, having been sceptical about the company's ability to digest the whole of the Broadgate development last year. The deal has been a huge success. Although he could have rubbed the city analysts noses in it, Mr Ritblat, typically, chose not to do so.

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Carlton changes image with £17m Getty film library stake

Pauline Springett

MEDIA group Carlton has forked out £17.3 million on a 10 per cent stake in Getty Communications, the film and picture library company backed by the Getty family dynasty.

Carlton has the option to increase its investment to 20 per cent within two years.

Jonathan Klein, Getty's chief executive and co-founder, said the newly injected funds would be used to expand the company organically and by acquisition.

Carlton's chairman, Michael Green, will join the Getty board as a non-executive director and Mr Klein said: "Michael has done with Carlton what we would like to do here."

Mr Klein said the deal would enable Getty Communications to benefit from Carlton's technical expertise in areas such as the manipulation of images on screen.

Mr Green said the deal would enable Carlton to tap into the distribution industry of distributing still and moving pictures. "Getty is at the forefront of this change," he said.

Mr Klein created Getty Communications three years ago with Mark Getty, the son of J. Paul Getty II the philanthropist.

Each founder owns just under 4 per cent of the company.

Getty Communications has since started to build up a portfolio of film and photograph libraries. In 1995 it acquired the Tony Stone Images business, a contemporary photographic library and this year it bought the Hulton Deutsch collection, one of the world's most famous photographic collections. In June the company was floated on the US Nasdaq exchange.

صكنا من الاجل

Racing

British Horseracing Board chairman replies to his critics in forthright Glimcrack speech. Chris Hawkins reports

Wakeham emphasises need for unity

LORD Wakeham came out fighting in his speech at last night's Glimcrack Dinner at York, traditionally held in honour of the winner of the Glimcrack Stakes in August, accusing his critics of naivety and racism, and of having more chiefs than Indians.



Debut defeat... Moonax puts in a good leap on his first outing over hurdles at Huntingdon yesterday but at the finish he found Sharpical too good

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARNON

"No sooner had the Chancellor sat down than the retributions began," said Wakeham. "Journalists reached for their theses and the divisions for which racing is regrettably notorious opened up. There were calls for 'Bristram Ricketts, my chief executive, and myself to be sacked or to resign."

what goes on in the real world. If racing is to continue to be taken seriously by Government, it needs quickly to develop a perceptible maturity in its approach to key issues and that means putting aside the relentless pursuit of sectional interests.

Racing people come in all shapes and sizes, rich and poor, mean and generous, knowledgeable and ignorant. No activity with which I have been involved in a pretty varied life possesses so many chiefs and so few Indians.

great disappointment to me that racing and the betting industry were unable to subscribe to a joint submission to the Treasury. "The extent to which two separate submissions really did prejudice the chances of success will never be known but one thing is certain, it didn't help."

sergeant-major stance to hint at the way forward and the possible solutions to the prime money crisis in racing. "The fixture list is one of the key areas we need to look at," he said. "We have tried very hard to produce a balanced list and meet the demands of our several customers, but that itself produces the complaint that there is too

much racing, particularly when our prime money levels are so desperately low. "One particular statistic provides food for thought; Michael Stoute has won more money overseas this year than Saeed bin Suroor in winning our domestic champion trainer title.

tiered structure of racecourses. However, a system of prize money which supports all levels to a degree but particularly encourages the courses that attract the crowds may be acceptable."

Sport in brief

George best in world

EMMA GEORGE of Australia twice broke the old mark in setting an indoor pole vault world record of 4.40 metres (14ft 5in) yesterday, writes Duncan Mackay. In a school gymnasium in Melbourne she first cleared 4.30m to add the indoor record to the outdoor one she collected a year ago and has since broken five times. The previous indoor record of 4.28m was held by China's Sun Catyuan.

Chess

Garry Kasparov took an immediate lead at Las Palmas in the tournament between the world's top six grandmasters, writes Leonard Barden. Despite playing black, the world No.1 defeated Bulgaria's Veselin Topalov in a 50-move Queen's Indian.

Hockey

India's Mohammed Riaz served a 38-minute suspension after receiving a yellow card in the first 10 seconds of the Champions Trophy 1-1 draw with Netherlands in Madras yesterday, writes Paul Rowley. He appeared to hit Martin Kiehlboom with his stick.

Cricket

The Derbyshire batsman Chris Adams yesterday threatened to go to the European courts if the county rejects his offer of £50,000 to buy out the remaining two years of his contract.

Ice Hockey

Cardiff Devils have signed the 28-year-old Mannheim forward Steve Thornton.

Golf

Nick Faldo will launch a nationwide junior series tomorrow week in an effort to discourage players of the future and give them an all-round grounding in the game.

Leicester with guide to the latest form

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.00 Peter's Club, 1.00 Shiloh, 1.00 Newcastle Royale, 1.00 Ashwell, 1.00 The Sky Padre, 1.00 Galathea, 1.00 Kestrel.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.00 BARNHAM HURDLE, 3.00 THE SHILLOE, 3.00 THE SKY PADRE, 3.00 GALATHEA, 3.00 KESTREL.

Lingfield all-weather Flat card

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 12.10 Our Shadow, 12.40 Indulgence, 1.10 Amped Fun, 1.40 Mr Moverment, 2.10 Chief Producer, 2.40 Wootton Bassett, 2.40 Millroy, 2.40 Wharfedale.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.00 THE SHILLOE, 2.00 THE SKY PADRE, 2.00 GALATHEA, 2.00 KESTREL, 2.00 THE SHILLOE, 2.00 THE SKY PADRE, 2.00 GALATHEA, 2.00 KESTREL.

1.30 Ashwell

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.30 Ashwell, 1.30 The Sky Padre, 1.30 Galathea, 1.30 Kestrel.

3.30 Barnham Hurdle

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.30 Barnham Hurdle, 3.30 The Shilloe, 3.30 The Sky Padre, 3.30 Galathea, 3.30 Kestrel.

1.30 The Sky Padre

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.30 The Sky Padre, 1.30 Galathea, 1.30 Kestrel.

3.30 Galathea

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.30 Galathea, 3.30 Kestrel.

1.30 Kestrel

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.30 Kestrel.

3.30 Kestrel

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.30 Kestrel.

2.00 The Shilloe

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.00 The Shilloe, 2.00 The Sky Padre, 2.00 Galathea, 2.00 Kestrel.

3.30 The Sky Padre

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.30 The Sky Padre, 3.30 Galathea, 3.30 Kestrel.

2.00 Galathea

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.00 Galathea, 2.00 Kestrel.

3.30 Kestrel

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 3.30 Kestrel.

Hexham runners and riders

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 12.30 Daily Day, 1.20 Barnham, 1.20 Wally Star, 1.20 Wally Star, 1.20 Wally Star.

2.50 Barnham

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.50 Barnham, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star.

1.50 Barnham

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.50 Barnham, 1.50 Wally Star, 1.50 Wally Star, 1.50 Wally Star.

2.50 Wally Star

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star.

1.50 Wally Star

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 1.50 Wally Star.

2.50 Wally Star

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Details. Includes races like 2.50 Wally Star.

Results

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Results. Includes races like HUNTINGDON, 12.30 Our Shadow, 12.40 Indulgence, 1.10 Amped Fun, 1.40 Mr Moverment, 2.10 Chief Producer, 2.40 Wootton Bassett, 2.40 Millroy, 2.40 Wharfedale.

2.50 Barnham

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Results. Includes races like 2.50 Barnham, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star.

1.50 Barnham

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Results. Includes races like 1.50 Barnham, 1.50 Wally Star, 1.50 Wally Star, 1.50 Wally Star.

2.50 Wally Star

Table with 2 columns: Race Name and Results. Includes races like 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star, 2.50 Wally Star.

Sharp shock for Moonax

MOONAX, the 1994 St Leger winner, was removed from Coral's Champion Hurdle betting after being beaten fair and square by Sharpical on his jumping debut at Huntingdon yesterday.

1.50 Barnham

He said: "Moonax stays two and a half miles on the Flat so he should stay three over hurdles. The Stayers' Hurdle at the Festival might be the obvious race, but there is a long way to go yet."

2.50 Wally Star

Sharpical earned a 50-1 Champion Hurdle quote from Hill's, who shortened Collier Bay to 7-1 from 8s.

1.50 Wally Star

Never far from the lead, Richard Dunwoody took up the running after the third last and a half miles on the Flat so he should stay three over hurdles. The Stayers' Hurdle at the Festival might be the obvious race, but there is a long way to go yet."

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.

Soccer

Two more clubs seek security through the City

Tony May on the stock market ambitions of struggling Southampton and Sunderland

SOUTHAMPTON and Sunderland became the latest clubs to seek City flotations yesterday. Sunderland put a \$47.7 million price tag on their stock market debut...

Some money will be diverted to help pay for car-parking facilities and the fitting-out of the club's new 215 million ground...

Futre is forced to quit

PAULO FUTRE, West Ham's Portuguese international striker, has decided to quit the game at 30 after being plagued by a knee injury.

fine their right pay structure if they are to tempt the Swiss international defender Ramon Vega to appear for them in the Premiership.

who is adamant he is worth \$500,000 a year net, is also being courted by Tottenham, but the London club's owner Alan Sugar is adamant he will not pay inflated salaries.

Scottish Premier Division Dundee United 1, Rangers 0

Tangerine tango as Gough and Gorm get in a tangle

RANGERS' unexpected slip at Tannadice last night will have been received by Celtic fans as joyously as it was by those following United.

as he made his way in from the left. It was not a penalty but the ball ran to McCoist, six yards out, and the record-breaking striker had a fresh-air swing at it.

Ginola hints at leaving

DAVID GINOLA suggested yesterday that this would be his last season with Arsenal and in English football.

CRICKET



Knight with shining armour... the England batsman hooks a four on the way to his hundred

Tour match: Matabeleland v England XI

Knight hits perky century

David Hopps in Bulawayo. NICK KNIGHT spent England's first test day on the Zimbabwe tour painting in the Matopos Hills, a few yards beneath the burial place of Cecil Rhodes.

In Harare, Knight had flopped three times, failing to negotiate the first hour when plentiful swing and seam had been available for the quicker bowlers.

up a bottle spell which failed to fetch him a wicket but which might just bring him a second Test cap down the road at Queen's next week.

palmed the edge past first slip. By this time Rennie had made only four when Olunga's delivery left him in the air and off the pitch.

Scoreboard

Table with columns for batsmen and their scores. Includes names like M A Atherton, J A Stewart, and scores like 100, 46, 44.

Table with columns for bowlers and their figures. Includes names like M A Boucher, J P Vaughan, and figures like 7/2, 0/0.

Harder life for 'lefties'

PHIL TUFNELL, Richard Hill and the like will find life more difficult when the Test and County Cricket Board - at its final meeting today before transmuting into the England and Wales Cricket Board - introduces legislation to curb left-arm spinners who at times fire the ball mindlessly down the leg side.

sent to the batting side. Adventurous spinners will, however, benefit from an extra 12 inches that will be added to the width of the stumps.

totally in-house - something which it is hoped will speed up the judicial process.

Azharuddin gives India control with chanceless 88 not out

AN UNBEATEN 88 by Mohammad Azharuddin swelled India's overall lead to 380 runs on the third day of the first of two Tests against South Africa in Kanpur yesterday.

morale when they were beaten by 58 runs in a limited-overs match against an Australian Prime Minister's XI in Canberra.

Team talk: The independent news and reports service. 0891 33 77+. Includes a list of football teams and their scores.

Results: Soccer, American Football, Basketball, Chess, Hockey, Ice Hockey, Cricket. Lists various sports events and their outcomes.

Fixtures: Soccer, Basketball, Chess, Hockey, Ice Hockey, Cricket. Lists upcoming sports events and dates.

early on against Tudor's pace and the prized wicket of Ian Botham, the latest full Test selection for three.

سورة من الاحول

Dell to go in Southampton takeover, page 14
Knight century lifts England, page 14

Cambridge supreme at Twickenham, page 15
Sports Academy shortlist named, page 15

SportsGuardian

MOTOR RACING



Tartan title contender... the Stewart-Ford SF1, which was created in nine months and is the first grand prix car to be designed entirely by computer. PHOTOGRAPHS: DOMINICK TYLER

Stewart races back into the fast lane

Debutant GP team up and running in double quick time

Alan Henry

JACKIE STEWART set his sights on a world championship for the new millennium when he unveiled his team's first grand prix car in London yesterday. The Stewart-Ford SF1 was created in only nine months and is the first Formula One car to be designed entirely by computer. It is powered by the latest Ford V10 engine and will make its debut in the first

race of the 1997 campaign in Melbourne on March 9. "The task of creating a new car from scratch in such a short time was formidable," said Stewart. "To the best of my knowledge this is the first Formula One car to have been designed by computer; there is not one conventional drawing board at our Milton Keynes headquarters." Stewart's son Paul, the team's managing director, said: "It has been an enormous challenge to plan the timetable, keep to the budget and

assemble so much in such a relatively short period of time. In many ways it has been nothing short of a miracle." Such is the reputation of the 57-year-old three-times world champion that Stewart Grand Prix have attracted a group of sponsors — uniquely including the Malaysian government, and no tobacco company — who have already put up a total of £15 million. This, combined with a five-year deal for works Ford engines and all associated technical back-up, means that F1's most

spectacular debutant of recent years has secured its operational budget three months before the start of the season. "We are financially sound, fully equipped and ready to go," Stewart said. The drivers are Jan Magnussen of Denmark and Rubens Barrichello of Brazil, although Stewart said the team had been 48 hours away from signing the world champion Damon Hill. "Negotiations went right down to the last couple of days, but I couldn't say we were disappointed because we expected him to go to Jordan. I found it surprising that he eventually went to TWR Arrows. Yet perhaps having the pressure of the reigning world champion in our team would have given us too much to cope with."

Stewart is reticent about the car's potential. "A reputation is built on the past, but success is built on the present and the future. We have got to deliver for the Stewart-Ford team, in our time and at our own pace. "I never promised a win in a grand prix or a championship when I was a driver. I wanted to deliver the best I could; if we were good enough then we would win. If we were really good enough we would win a championship. That's what we have to do again, but in a much more complicated environment. "Winning three world championships at the wheel sometimes seemed easy compared with the challenges of building our own team. It has been a greater challenge, more complicated and more difficult than just being a driver." He paid tribute to the team's technical director Alan Jenkins and to Paul Stewart. "It has been particularly nice to undertake this programme with my own flesh and blood. I really don't think I would have done it without Paul."

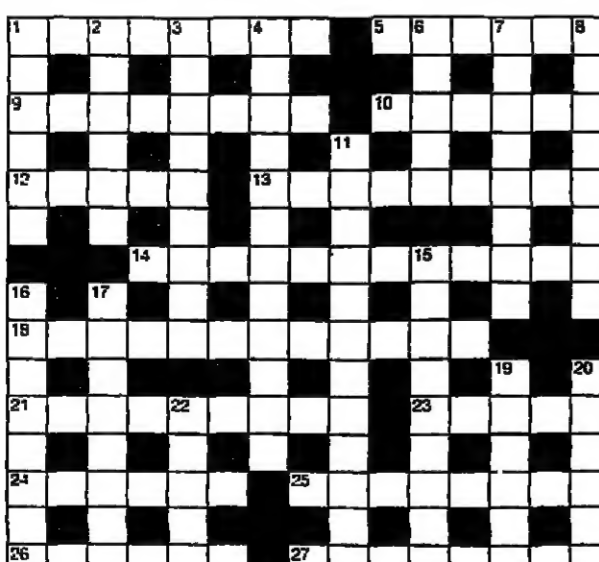
Stewart's alliance with Ford represents the continuation of his 32-year liaison with the company. "This partnership shows that Ford has become re-committed to F1," said Ford's European motorsport director Martin Whitaker. "Since Michael Schumacher's 1994 world championship victory in the Benetton-Ford I think the company has lost some of the impetus behind its Formula One involvement. We have had two years in the wilderness and now we have the chance with Stewart to seriously get back into it."



Stewart... title ambitions tempered by patience

Guardian Crossword No 20,833

Set by Bunthorne



- 22,21 Sow dissension on all sides (3-2-3-6)
- 24 Anti-poetical state, in a way (6)
- 25 Abstract picture roughly slashed (3-5)
- 26 Ruth Rendell's first getting the bird (6)
- 27 Scripture class absorbing a Richardsonian epic (8)

Down

- 1 Dine out, with barely-committed vegetarian on salad (8)
- 2 Grapes here in quite outstanding condition (6)
- 3 Homeliest form of elastic (9)
- 4 What 5 might do a-24.21 (4,4,4)
- 6 Tight one over this band? (5)
- 7 Bow with ocular manifestation of Christmas (5,3)
- 8 Form the core of a ten-clue puzzle (9)
- 11 Straight man seeing Eros exult with a... (1,2)
- 15... Polish thesis demonstrating the 11 Chopin (8)
- 16 Hanley's commander loses a turn to a countryman (8)
- 17 Laing's analysis encompasses the heir-apparent (8)

- Across**
- 1 One's addressed in French on Tour de France bike training (8)
 - 5 Shark is about Pope's essay? (3,3)
 - 9 See 13
 - 10 No stress: not in Langley's circle (6)
 - 12 Never very partial to heat (5)
 - 13,9,14 So disenchanted, bored to the teeth, things aren't the way they could be (4,5,4,4,3,3,1-5)
 - 14 See 13
 - 18 Goal thus achieved after a postal strike! (2,3,7)
 - 21 See 23

Solution tomorrow

22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0204 338 228. Calls cost 50p per minute Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm, and 45p per minute at all other times. Service supplied by ATS

Ruck 'n' maul - all the way to the bar



Jim White

THE University Match took place yesterday. For logistical reasons which will soon become apparent, this column was filed before kick-off. However, it is possible to bring you the score: 75,000 Bloody Marys, 150,000 pints of bitter, 12,500 gallons of lager, 6,500 bottles of malt whisky and, if laid end to end, about half a mile of hot dogs. Somewhere in the middle of that, though very few of those in attendance will have noticed, 90 students played rugby.

"Not at all," says Ms Bowring, who is so committed to the fixture that she sleeps with the trophy under her bed the night before the game. "That's just a myth. These are rugby people enjoying a great rugby occasion." Clearly Ms Bowring's view from the Rose Room was somewhat different from mine the last time I went. In fact, perched in the vertiginous upper reaches of one of the new stands, I saw very little of the game, my sight of the proceedings being continually interrupted by the row of Father Christmases in front of me. Every two minutes the entire line of merry men would stand to allow a Santa the chance to get out to empty his bladder. By half-time three of the St Nicks were asleep, one had contrived to flush his beard down the loo, and another was nursing a slapped cheek after he suggested to a woman in the crowd that she might like to come home and help him unwrap a few Christmas surprises. Like most of the crowd, my day had begun at the Alma pub in Wandsworth at 11am. This was clearly the place that executives of the Barbour coat company go to watch their profits pass by. The place was awash with waxed cotton; apparently, as with Newcastle fans and replica shirts, not to wear a Barbour to the Varsity match is to show you don't really belong. At about 1pm the pub emptied, its occupants swimming to Twickenham.

Then Bowring, the City insurers, agreed to sponsor the event and pump in some much-needed funds (£175,000 this year). Bowring used the occasion both to promote itself within the universities for recruitment purposes (last year's Oxford captain Tyrone Howe, for instance, is now working for the company) and to entertain its clients. Indeed, as a barometer for the way corporate hospitality in sport has developed, the University Match has few equals. In 1976 Bowring entertained 60 guests to lunch in a Fulham restaurant before the game; this year there were about 300 of them in Twickenham's magnificent new Rose Room. By 1986, for no apparent reason, the match had grown into a sell-out, the car-parks around Twickenham bristling with the wall entertained. So why was Bowring suddenly joined by most of the rest of the City of London? Why is it that now a game between two university sides can attract a full house whereas for a spectacle such as England against the New Zealand Barbarians there were more gaps in the South stand than in a seven-year-old's smile? "I think it's because a lot of City people went to the universities and want to support their old teams," says Carol Bowring, the sponsor's PR director. "The thing I couldn't get over, as I approached the ground, was the noise: a constant barking bray as if 75,000 seals were migrating to their mating grounds. Everywhere you looked there were Barbours snoring on public benches, a couple of Barbours had ceased to talk English altogether and were conversing in what they assumed was Swahili. Not once, however, in the mel-storm did I see a Barbour act in a remotely violent fashion. It would be unfair, though, to suggest that no one was interested in the competitive elements of the day. After the game had passed in a swirl, I asked a Barbour I encountered outside the ground if he had any idea who had won. "Course, matey," he barked. "It was Big Henry: 14 pints of Wadworth's and a kebab and he still wants to go back to the Alma for more."

Australians hit all the wrong notes

David Plummer on an ill-judged move to keep cricket's spectators entertained

AUSTRALIA, the land that gave armchair cricket lovers the sight of Waddles the duck accompanying non-scoring batsmen back to the pavilion, often while Tony Greig screamed "Goodnight Charlie" into the nearest microphone, has had second thoughts about its latest gimmick to brighten up games for paying spectators. When the Australians played West Indies in World Series one-day games last week, the visiting batsmen were surprised to hear the strains of Hit the Road, Jack, Return to Sender, and See You Later, Alligator, played over the Tannoy as they headed for the pavilion. And there was no musical accompaniment when the Australians themselves made the long walk. Yesterday's Melbourne Age contained a swingy editorial about this, and the

Australian Cricket Board later said the practice would be dropped because it might be considered unsporting. "There used to be... polite applause as batsmen began their long walk back to the pavilion. Now there are bursts of amplified pop music, apparently selected with intimidation or humiliation in mind," wrote the Age's leader writer. The ACE's marketing manager David Fouvy said the tunes were being dropped to put the emphasis on positive aspects of the game. "We found that it was not appropriate because

there was a risk these songs could be misunderstood. We did not want there to be any chance it might be seen as gloating." Queen's We Will Rock You will still be used, though, as will the voice of the cartoon character Homer Simpson. For next summer's Ashes series, maybe the England side should consider blasting Colonel Bogey through the Lord's Tannoy as the Aussies depart the middle. And the voice of Mr Magoo might be appropriate as England's batsmen make the long walk.

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